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Amateur Photographer For everyone who loves photography

I'M NOT a great fisherman by any means, and have made no study of the subject beyond asking dumb questions once a year in a shop that tolerates my inadequacies because I'm happy to blindly buy the bait and tackle that they recommend. In truth, my understanding of the sport is almost non-existent, other than that I can appreciate the idea of hunting for that which does not want to be caught. River fishing, in my mind, has no end product, unless luck provides a tan from a sunny day, while sea fishing (looked down upon, I believe, by true enthusiasts) at least gives you something to stink the house out with and a meal if you are lucky. There is no joy for me to hold a rod and catch nothing of any use.

Photography, of course, is an entirely different matter, and one I do understand. It is a great enjoyment to spend the day taking pictures, even if none of them turns out to be an award-winner. The pleasure of looking, observing and clicking away with a nice camera is sport enough for many amateurs. Others do require a perfect finished product for their efforts, and settle for nothing less. It depends, I suppose, on what you consider the reward to be of taking part.



Damien Demolder
Editor

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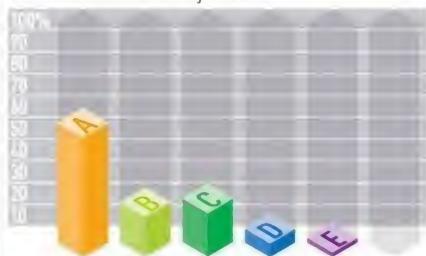
AP's photo-science consultant Professor Bob Newman examines how a digital camera 'develops' information into a visible image



THE AP READERS' POLL

IN AP 22 OCTOBER WE ASKED...

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YOU ANSWERED...

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B	I do use Kodak, but not as much as I used to	18%
C	I still used lots of Kodak products	20%
D	I've never bought anything from Kodak	6%
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What is the reward of photography for you?

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AP hands on Fujifilm FinePix X10

The FinePix X100's baby brother is in many ways a more practical compact camera and comes at a slightly less premium price.

Mat Gallagher gets his hands on an early sample of the X10

AFTER the huge success of the FinePix X100, Fujifilm's next model is a second classically styled high-end compact in the form of the X10. Almost half the price, but offering unique new features, the X10 could almost be described as an X100 lite. Just a month after its first announcement, I was lucky enough to get my hands on a preproduction sample to try to get a feel for what this camera really has to offer.

FEATURES

The X10 is nearly 10% smaller and 15% lighter than the X100, measuring 117x69.6x56.8 and weighing 350g. This puts it around the same size as leading advanced compact cameras such as the Canon PowerShot G12 and Nikon P7100. The X10's body feels solid in the hand, and features a magnesium top and bottom plate, plus metal control dials. The

pure-black finish looks classy and gives the impression that this model is even more of a manual camera than the X100, with only the 2.8in, 460,000-dot rear screen offering any hint of its true digital internals.

One noticeable external change from the X100 is the lens. Instead of a fixed 35mm equivalent, the X10 features a 4x zoom (28-112mm equivalent) with an f/2-2.8 aperture. The best thing about this lens, though, is that the zoom control has remained manual via a rotation of the lens ring. This movement also incorporates the power control, so by twisting the lens to the 28mm position it turns the camera on. To turn it off, the lens is turned around to the off position. This helps speed up operation and avoids the need for another button.

The other noticeable inclusion on this camera is the viewfinder. The X10 retains a true optical viewfinder, which, although not

AT A GLANCE

- 12-million-pixel, 1/2.3in, EXR CMOS sensor
- EXR core processor
- 28-112mm equivalent f/2-2.8 lens
- ISO 100-3200 (up to ISO 12,800 reduced resolution)
- Optical viewfinder (85% coverage)
- 2.8in, 460,000-dot LCD
- 1080p HD video
- Expected price £529

TTL, provides a zoom to match the framing of the lens. This is not a hybrid viewfinder like the X100, so there is no option to swap over to an LCD live view, although the rear LCD screen can be used for composition in this way. It is a shame there is no exposure information in the viewfinder, though, as a small LCD display under the image with basic shutter and aperture values, or even just a digital exposure needle, would have been useful.

With the X10 being so compact I often forgot about the viewfinder and instinctively used the LCD, but once I reminded myself to use it, the viewfinder was large, clear and particularly useful with the zoom.

SENSOR

The sensor in the X10 is a 12-million-pixel back-side-illuminated EXR CMOS unit. This features the angled pixel design seen on cameras such as the FinePix F550 EXR and HS20, and at 1/2.3in it is a much smaller unit than the APS-C-sized sensor on the X100. In fact, with many of its direct competition sporting larger 1/1.7in sensors, it will be interesting to see how this compares in quality, especially in low light. Alongside the sensor is Fujifilm's EXR core processor. As we've seen on previous EXR



models, this allows the pixels to be used in three different combinations, with high-resolution mode using all individually, wide dynamic range using half for highlights and half for shadows, and high-sensitivity/noise mode using the pixels in pairs to collect more light. These can be set manually or via the EXR auto mode and there is a new motion control function to detect movement in the image and increase the shutter speed to avoid blur. The X10's sensitivity offers an ISO of 100-12,800, although ISO settings of 4000-6400 are at a maximum of 6 million pixels and ISO 12,800 is at 3 million pixels, so for full resolution you are limited to ISO 100-3200.

Continuous shooting is available at 7fps, or 10fps at 6 million pixels, although write times appear to be fairly lengthy if the card-writing light is to be believed. Metering is via a 256-zone TTL system, offering a full complement of multi, spot and average, while exposure compensation is available on the handy top dial but limited to just 2EV in each direction. Exposure modes are available from the shooting mode dial and include PASM creative modes, along with two custom settings, 16 scene modes, auto, EXR settings, movie and the advanced mode with 360° panorama shooting.

pro focus and pro low-light settings. The panorama mode allows a full 360° image to be captured in a single sweep, as seen on other recent EXR models. The X10 also features signature colour modes, pared down to the equivalent film types of Provia (standard), Astia and Velvia, plus mono modes with colour filter options.

The focusing is contrast-detection based and is quick to lock onto the subject, while there is a choice of single-point, area or multi-selection AF, although on the preproduction model there was no option to adjust the position of the single-point AF from the centre. However, face detection also features, so selective focus is rarely missed. While the zoom is controlled via the lens, manual focus is adjusted via the rear dial, which I found a bit fiddly to fine-tune. The X10 offers close focusing with macro and super-macro modes for subjects just 1cm from the lens when set to its widest focal length.

Above right: The premium leather case provides quick access to the camera

Top left: The top-plate includes a hotshoe, shooting-mode dial and exposure compensation, plus a function button next to the shutter

Left: The 2.8in LCD dominates the rear of the camera, while additional buttons are well placed around it

IN USE

If you turn off the rear screen on the X10, it is almost possible to forget you are shooting with a digital camera. The one thing that gives it away is the rather digital-sounding shutter noise. I'm sure something more mechanical sounding would have been possible, such as the motorwind noise created by the Leica M9. The screen is useful, not just for reviewing images but also for exposure information and control. For street-style documentary shots I found shooting from the hip using the screen gained a lot less attention than putting the camera up to my eye, and the LCD screen was bright and clear enough to use even in fairly strong light. The lens unit has to be my favourite part of this camera, and I look forward to seeing if the results of its fast-aperture optics reveal themselves in the images.

PRICE

The X10 is expected to cost £529 when it goes on sale later this month, which puts it close to compact system camera territory. Although it has the same sized sensor as the Pentax Q, its price seems high for its specification. However, it is still cheaper than the Leica-badged D-Lux 5. There are a couple of accessories in the form of a leather case and a lens hood, which features a 52mm filter thread, that add further to the camera's classic appeal.

OVERALL

Like the X100, I'm sure the Fujifilm FinePix X10 will be a popular model with camera enthusiasts and in many ways it is a more practical offering than its big brother. Those users who have been screaming for more compact cameras with viewfinders should be pleased, and the lens operation is a refreshingly manual solution on such a compact camera. Fujifilm seems to be making a storming return to the advanced compact camera market, with another camera rumoured for early next year. We will be giving the X10 a full test in the near future to see if it lives up to my very high expectations.



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“ The EOS-1D X and EOS-1Ds Mark III would be very similar ”



Canon's pixel pitch, page 8

Thai floods hit Canon cameras • Sony halts NEX-7 debut

CANON WARNS OF CAMERA DELAYS

CANON has warned of delays to camera production and Sony has suspended the launch of its flagship NEX-7 camera as the impact of the Thailand floods becomes clear.

Two Canon inkjet printer factories in central Thailand have already closed, halting production of the firm's yet-to-be-launched flagship Pixma Pro-1 printer (see page 9).

Although Canon has not divulged which cameras will be hit, a spokesperson told AP: 'While Canon does not have camera-manufacturing facilities in Thailand, our parts suppliers have also sustained damage due to the floods that will affect Canon camera production.'

Meanwhile, Canon plans to ship 1.1 million fewer digital cameras for the year to the end of March, as a direct result of the crisis, according to reports in Japan.

The spokesperson said the firm has established a 'recovery task force' to minimise the impact on customers.

In September, Canon unveiled its PowerShot S100 digital compact, which combines a 'high-sensitivity' 12.1-million-pixel CMOS sensor with a Digic 5 image processor. Last month, the company unwrapped its EOS-1D X – an 18.1-million-pixel, full-frame DSLR designed to replace the EOS-1D Mark IV and EOS-1Ds Mark III. However, the EOS-1D X is not due to go on sale until next year.

The floods forced Canon Hi-Tech



The NEX-7's European launch has been postponed indefinitely, according to Sony

(Thailand) Ltd to shut down two inkjet plants in Ayutthaya: one in Rojana Industrial Estate and one in the Hi-Tech Industrial Estate.

Meanwhile, Canon told visitors to its recent Pro Solutions show in London that it expected the Pro-1 printer, which was due to go on sale this month, to be delayed until the end of November or December.

Sony has confirmed that it has postponed, indefinitely, the European launch of its NEX-7 camera.

Production of the Sony NEX-5N and NEX-C3 compact system camera (CSC) models has also been hit, according to a statement issued by Sony Japan.

However, a Sony Europe spokesperson told us that availability of the Alpha 65 SLT



Canon's 12.1-million-pixel PowerShot S100

model is not affected in Europe.

A Sony Europe statement read: 'Due to severe flooding, factories in Thailand were forced to suspend operations for the time being. Because of this, shipment of the Sony NEX-7 will be affected.'

The Alpha 65 is classed as an enthusiast model, while the NEX-7 is the flagship model in Sony's NEX mirrorless CSC range.

Nikon's DSLR plant in central Thailand remains closed as staff are banned from entering the premises, where the water level is around two metres high.

The plant, located in the Ayutthaya Province, shut down on 6 October, halting production of most Nikon DSLRs and interchangeable lenses. The Ayutthaya plant normally produces about five million DSLRs per year, and a similar number of lenses, according to Nikon UK.

In a statement published on the firm's Japanese website on 21 October, Nikon confirmed that the first floor of the building remains submerged. 'We still have difficulty to grasp overall damage of our equipment and facility since access to the premises continues to be prohibited.'

Nikon is understood to manufacture around 90% of all its DSLRs and 60% of its interchangeable lenses in Thailand. There is no word when the plant will re-open.

SNAP SHOTS

● War photographers and aspiring photojournalists will receive help from a fund set up in memory of American photographer Chris Hondros. Chris was killed in Libya earlier this year, alongside British photographer Tim Hetherington. Each year the Chris Hondros Fund will award a Fellowship in Photojournalism to an outstanding photojournalist. It will also provide grants to organisations that promote photojournalism and aims to raise awareness about their work through lectures and exhibitions. Visit www.chrishondrosfund.org.

● A new medium-format film scanner has been released by Reflecta. Priced £2,250, the Reflecta MidFormat Scan MF5000 features a three-line CCD image sensor that aims to deliver an optical scanning resolution of 3200x3200ppi. For details call 01793 615 836 or visit www.kenro.co.uk.



Do you have a story?

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JESSOPS OPENS THIRD 'CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE'

CUSTOMERS will be shown key camera features that will allow them to make comparisons with rival models at Jessops' latest Centre of Excellence in Edinburgh.

The refurbished shop, which is the chain's third Centre of Excellence, joins stores in Manchester and Birmingham. It promises a new 'customer-friendly layout,' where visitors will be encouraged to trial new kit.

'This next level of interactivity means customers can easily compare the

performance of comparative cameras with this refreshing hands-on approach,' claimed Jessops in a statement.

Services include 25-minute photo printing, and an in-store large-format printer for posters and canvases.

CEO Trevor Moore said: 'Once customers see how dedicated we are to photography, and the level of service we are providing, it will give them the confidence to make that all-important purchase.'



A week of photographic opportunity PHOTODIARY

Wednesday 9 November

EXHIBITION Façades, black & white photos by Carita Laamanen, until 17 January 2012.



Visit <http://2011.photomonth.org>. **EXHIBITION** Benjamin Katz: Atlas Exchanged by Gerhard Richter, until 12 November at Daniel Blau Ltd, London N1 6PB. Tel: 0207 831 7998. Visit www.danielblau.com.

Thursday 10 November

EXHIBITION The Alchemy of Light by photographer and printmaker Colin Homes and Eugen Jarych, until 1 December at FifeSpace Gallery, Fife KY7 5NX. Tel: 08451 555 555. **EXHIBITION** Shooting on the Front Line: One Soldier's War in Afghanistan by TA Reservist Major Paul Smyth, until 29 January 2012, at The River & Rowing Museum, Oxfordshire RG9 1BF. Tel: 01491 415 600. Visit www.rrm.co.uk.

Friday 11 November

EXHIBITION Other I, includes works of Magnum Photos photographer Alec Soth, until 27 November at Hotshoe Gallery, London EC1N 8SW. Visit www.hotshoegallery.com. **EXHIBITION** Eugène Atget: Select Works, until 12 November at James Hyman Photography, London W1S 3PD. Tel: 0207 494 3857. Visit www.jameshymanphotography.com.

Saturday 12 November

DON'T MISS Lord Mayor's Show – parade starts at Mansion House in the City of London at 11am. Fireworks over the Thames at 5pm. Visit www.lordmayorsshow.org. **DON'T MISS** Birds of prey display (11am-3pm) at Bodiam Castle, East Sussex TN32 5UA. Tel: 01580 830 196. Visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk.

Sunday 13 November

DON'T MISS FfotAber festival, in Aberystwyth, Wales (ends on 19 November with a Welsh documentary photography festival at the National Library of Wales SY23 3BU). Tel: 01970 632 800. Visit www.llgc.org.uk. **EXHIBITION** Landscape photos by Gary Groucutt, until 23 December at Esquires Coffee Houses, Ambleside, Cumbria LA22 9BT. Tel: 01539 433 727. Visit www.garygroucutt.com.

Monday 14 November

EXHIBITION Downtown by Kelly McCann, until 19 November at The Underground Gallery, Charing Cross Underground Station (Exit 9), London WC2N 4HZ. Tel: 0207 379 8828. **EXHIBITION** Astronomy Photographer of the Year, until 12 February 2012 at the Royal Observatory Greenwich, London SE10 8XJ. Visit www.rnm.ac.uk.

Tuesday 15 November **LATEST AP ON SALE**

EXHIBITION The Everest Generation, until 25 November at Hoopers Gallery, London EC1R 0AA. Tel: 0207 490 3907. Visit www.hoopersgallery.co.uk. **EXHIBITION** Cabinet of Curiosities by Bill Jackson, until 30 November at Troika Editions, London EC1R 3EA. Tel: 0207 833 2330. Visit www.troikaeditions.co.uk.



'Same resolution' as EOS-1Ds Mark III

CANON EOS-1D X DELIVERS '21MP'

CANON'S new EOS-1D X camera will produce the same resolution as the 21-million-pixel EOS-1Ds Mark III despite having three million fewer pixels, according to the company's senior general manager of photo products, Tsunemasa Ohara.

Speaking to AP at the Canon Pro Solutions show in London, Ohara explained that with efficiencies in collecting light, the newly designed 18-million-pixel sensor used in the EOS-1D X would perform just as well in a Modulation Transfer Function (MTF) test [which measures image characteristics, such as resolution].

Asked how the new camera could be an adequate replacement of the higher-pixel-density EOS-1Ds Mark III, Ohara told AP that the 21% larger pixels on the new sensor, together with the gapless micro-lens array, are able to gather much more light.

'We have designed the Canon CMOS sensor for the EOS-1D X so that it is thinner than before and so that the photodiodes are closer to the surface of the sensor,' he said. 'In this way, the pixels collect more light and produce a better, clearer, signal.'

'With less noise, and our new improved processing algorithms, the camera is able to reproduce more detail. While using MTF is not perhaps the best way to measure the resolution of the camera, if you did use this method the results for the EOS-1D X and EOS-1Ds Mark III would be very similar.'

While it is easy to see how the full-frame, 12-frames-per-second camera is a

replacement for the sport-orientated EOS-1D Mark IV, it is less obvious how it replaces the high-resolution EOS-1Ds Mark III.

But Ohara assured us that the improvements Canon has made to the signal processing via the use of two DIGIC 5+ processors and the physical changes in the sensor make that possible.

Canon has also redesigned its mirror mechanism to allow for such a high frame rate to be achieved. Ohara said that gravity now plays no part in the way the mirror flips down after an exposure has been made, and that both up and down movements are now carefully controlled by motors.

Ohara added: 'We had to prevent the mirror bouncing when it returns so we could lift it again to maintain the high frame rate. To do this the mirror's downward motion is powered in the same way that it is powered to go up.'

Asked if a fixed pellicle mirror, of the sort used by Sony in its latest Alpha SLT products, would have helped, Ohara replied that it wouldn't have been ideal in this case. 'A pellicle mirror provides a good way to create a high frame rate, but in this camera there are other features that would be compromised by the loss of light,' he said. 'We would not have been able to offer such high ISO settings without increased noise, and we've found that vignetting is increased when long lenses are used. The EOS-1D X could not be compromised in this way.'

Damien Demolder, Editor

SNAP SHOTS

● Panasonic has invited amateurs and semi-professional photographers to enter its Lumix Award, which boasts a Lumix DMC-GF3 micro four thirds camera as top prize. Participants can enter one photo per month until the closing date of 31 March 2012. The theme is 'Life is a Stage'. Terms of entry stipulate that entrants must agree to allow Panasonic to use photos for free for marketing and promotional activities for five years and publish them on third-party websites. Winners will be credited in any published images, says the firm. Visit www.lumixaward.com.

● Tripod maker Manfrotto will launch a 'Pop-Up Photo Lab' in Covent Garden, London, from 18-20 November, allowing visitors to try out the latest kit in a temporary studio. Resulting pictures will be uploaded to the Manfrotto Imagine More Facebook page. The Manfrotto Interactive Photo Lab (opposite the London Transport Museum) will open from 11am-10pm on 18-19 November and 11am-6pm on 20 November. Visit www.manfrotto.co.uk (click on news and events).



Do you have a story?

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Japan's prime minister also enters fray OLYMPUS CHIEF RESIGNS AS CRISIS DEEPENS

THE CHAIRMAN of Olympus has resigned and Japan's prime minister has demanded swift action amid the deepening financial controversy engulfing the camera maker.

The news comes as the UK photo industry voices its concern for the future of the brand as the company faces scrutiny by fraud investigators.

Olympus chairman Tsuyoshi Kikukawa resigned to restore confidence in Olympus after the crisis caused the firm's share price to plummet more than 50%.

Kikukawa previously denied that the firm paid financial advisers excessive commission in relation to its acquisition of British medical equipment firm Gyrus in 2008.

Olympus Tokyo later confirmed it had paid the \$687m fee after all, but denied any wrongdoing.

Now Japan's prime minister has entered the fray, warning that the controversy threatens to damage the country's global reputation. He demanded that the camera maker fully explain the high fees paid to advisers.

In what was seen as a rare move by a Japanese prime minister, Yoshihiko Noda told the *Financial Times*: 'What worries me is that it will be a problem if people take the events at this one Japanese company and generalise from that to say Japan is a country that [does not follow] the rules of capitalism. Japanese society is not that kind of society.'

Meanwhile, the Photo Marketing Association (PMA), an international trade body, has expressed its fears for the future of the company which produced its first camera, the Semi-Olympus 1, in 1936.



Olympus chairman Tsuyoshi Kikukawa (above left) has resigned, while former CEO Michael Woodford (above right) was fired in October

PMA's director of UK operations, Nigel McNaught, told AP: 'Olympus is a very strong and respected brand both within the trade and by the consumer. We would hope that there is no negative impact on its

image and profile as a manufacturer of high-quality photo goods.'

Olympus has set up an independent six-member panel to probe the contentious payments, chaired by Tatsuo Kainaka, a former supreme court judge.

Michael Woodford, the former CEO who was fired after questioning fees paid to financial advisers (see *News*, AP 5 November), had yet to respond to our request for comment at the time of writing.

Speaking to *Sky News* on 31 October, Woodford said Olympus is a 'good business' and will survive the controversy.

However, Woodford added that he doubts the internal investigation will get to the bottom of the questionable transactions.

'They did a third-party investigation two years ago and that was a complete and utter whitewash,' he claimed in an interview on *Jeff Randall Live*.

Olympus said it fired Woodford – who was just two weeks into his role as CEO – over a clash of management styles.

Olympus once again insisted that the FBI has not been in touch with the firm, despite numerous reports suggesting otherwise.

The FBI's New York office had yet to return our calls as we went to press.

NEW BOSS ISSUES APOLOGY

OLYMPUS has apologised to customers and shareholders for all the 'distress and trouble' sparked by the ongoing financial controversy, and pledged to 'restore trust'.

Olympus's new president Shuichi Takayama said: 'We wish to make a profound apology for all the distress and trouble caused due to the recent series of media reports and fall in stock prices triggered by our recent change in president.'

He added: 'The past acquisitions mentioned in the media were handled with the appropriate evaluations and procedures. These transactions were in no way improper and we are setting up an external panel of experts to examine and report on this acquisitions activity...'

'We sincerely hope to conclude this situation as quickly as possible to restore society's trust in us and to bring reassurance to our customers, business partners, shareholders and employees.'



CANON UNVEILS A3+ PRINTER

CANON bills its new flagships Pixma Pro-1 inkjet printer as the world's first A3+ model to feature 12 separate inks. Due out this month (although it might be delayed – see page 7), and priced £799, the Pixma Pro-1 features a new Chroma Optimizer cartridge for 'increased black density and uniform glossiness'.

The Chroma Optimizer is automatically sprayed on gloss or semi-gloss paper to 'fill the gaps between pigment particles', said Canon Europe's marketing manager for inkjet products, Saeed Mughal.

The 16-bits-per-channel Pro-1 has 12 inks, which are 'piped' to the print head via tubes, rather than the cartridges being mounted onto the head itself, thereby boosting print times and reducing vibration of the unit.

Mughal admitted that this technology adds to the price of the printer, which is around £200 more expensive than the £599 Pixma Pro 9500 Mark II.

The Pro-1 print head houses 12,288 nozzles, which is the highest for a consumer printer, according to Canon.

Canon claims the £29.99 ink tanks have a capacity 2½ times larger than before and that ink costs work out at around 83p per ml. Ink

cartridges on the 9500 Mark II cost £14.99.

The cartridges are designed to last for 250 A3+ pages, while the Chroma Optimizer cartridge will produce 90 pages, according to Canon.

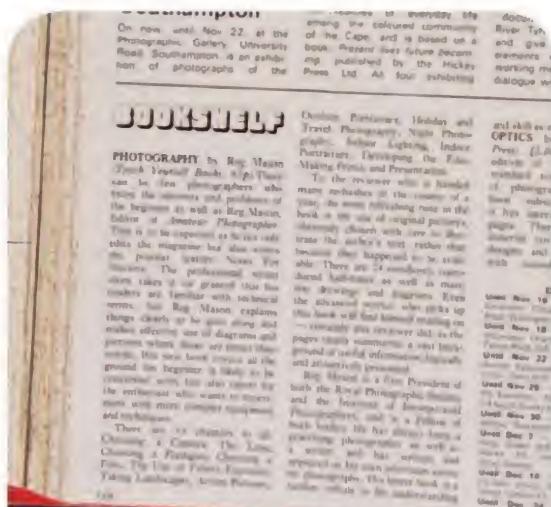
The Pro-1 supports an input resolution of 1200ppi, which is double that of Canon's previous Pixma-series professional printers.

It boasts an A3 print time of 2mins 55secs compared to 7mins 55secs previously.

It uses five black cartridges in photo black, matt, dark grey, grey and light grey.

The 4800x2400dpi (maximum print resolution) Pro-1 also includes new Lucia pigment inks and boasts a droplet size of four picolitres. Users can create ICC profiles specifically for the paper they choose, for 'professional colour control', claims the firm.

A new Linear Tone mode aims to deliver the colour users expect, said Saeed in an interview with AP.



AP THIS WEEK IN...

1974

In the week that Lord Lucan disappeared, AP's Bookshelf column brought word of a new tome written by the AP Editor Reg Mason, who, as a past president of the RPS, had been credited with his own TV series on photography. Simply called *Photography*, Reg's 65-page book was aimed at beginners, but also catered for the 'enthusiast who wanted to experiment with more complex equipment and techniques'. Chapters included Choosing a Camera, Action Pictures and Outdoor Portraiture. 'There are 24 excellently reproduced half-tones as well as many line drawings. Even the advanced worker who picks this up will find himself reading on,' stated the reviewer.

CLUB NEWS

Club news from around the country

ILKLEY CAMERA CLUB

On 11 November the club will host an evening entitled The Darkroom and Beyond by landscape photographer Tom Dodd FRPS, chairman of the London Salon. Meetings take place at Church House, Ilkley West Yorkshire. Visit www.ilkleycameraclub.co.uk.

NATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

The society's user group says it will hold informal meetings on the first Monday and Tuesday of each month. Non-members are welcome. For details call Ian Pack on 07710 814 665 or visit www.national-photographic-society.co.uk.

SNAP SHOTS

● Kodak single-use cameras are circulating the world in a project giving members of the public the chance to take a picture before passing them on. The cameras are tracked purely by the user inputting the camera number into a specific website stating where they took the picture, say organisers of the Disposable Memory Project. For details visit www.disposablememoryproject.org.

● Renowned landscape photographer Joe Cornish has opened three new photo galleries in North Yorkshire. The galleries are situated on the first and second floors at Register House, Zetland Street, Northallerton, North Yorkshire DL6 1NA. Tel: 01609 777404. Visit www.joecornishgallery.co.uk.



Do you have a story?

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McCabe fears firm may disappear

KODAK IN WAR OF WORDS OVER FILM

KODAK has hit out at comments by renowned photographer Eamonn McCabe, who said film is making a 'comeback' yet Kodak is 'struggling to survive'.

The article, published in *The Guardian* on 5 October, followed a 54% crash in Kodak's share price, after which the firm denied it plans to file for bankruptcy.

In the comment piece, headlined 'Don't take my Kodak away', McCabe wrote: 'It was bad enough when Kodak took away the photographer's favourite film, Kodachrome, even after Paul Simon had begged them not to in his 1970s song that lauded its "nice bright colours".'

He added: 'Now it's much worse, as it looks as though the whole thing may soon disappear. The very name Kodak is synonymous with all that is good about photography.'

'It's an irony that just as film is making a comeback with many photographers, the major firm in photography's history – which made its first camera way back in 1888 – is struggling.'

The US firm has since moved to reassure traditional photographers that it will continue to supply film 'as long as there is demand', yet pledged its commitment to digital photography.

In 2008, Kodak told AP that film was making a significant comeback. It said certain black & white films were bucking the downward trend in demand among professional photographers in Western Europe and the US. A year earlier, a Kodak survey of professionals across Europe revealed that most still preferred film.

In his article, McCabe outlined a return to black & white film photography and an 'underground revival' with 'camera shops opening in discreet venues around our big cities, often masquerading as coffee shops'.

He asserted that some film cameras had doubled in value



in recent years as processing labs report 'their best turnover figures in five years as many photographers come back'.

Responding to McCabe's comments, Eastman Kodak spokesman Christopher Veronda claimed that 'some of [McCabe's] statements tied back to the film business don't make a lot of sense'.

He added: 'Today, three-fourths of Kodak's revenues are digital, while at the same time we continue to offer the broadest portfolio of films for consumers and professionals in the industry, including the leading colour and black & white films.'

Veronda explained that Kodachrome was retired only a couple of years ago – partly because other Kodak films had become far more popular choices.

He said: 'Kodak has noted the resurgence in interest in some quarters in film photography, and has been an industry leader in continuing to innovate in the film category with new products. We will continue to make film as long as there is demand for it.'

In 2009, Kodak announced it was to discontinue production of its Kodachrome 64 film after 74 years, blaming falling sales due to the uptake in digital imaging.

Kodak recently struck a deal with Imax that will see new Kodak digital laser projection technology introduced in cinemas in 2013.



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APReview

The latest photography books, exhibitions and websites. By Oliver Atwell

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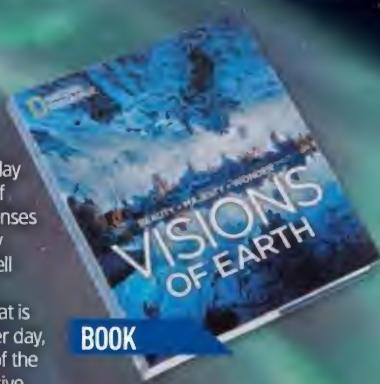
Visions of Earth

by Susan Tyler Hitchcock,
National Geographic, £19.99,
512 pages, hardback,
ISBN 978-1426209352

THIS large tome attempts to display the 'beauty, majesty and wonder' of our natural world, all through the lenses of various wildlife and documentary photographers. The book tries to sell itself as an antidote to the endless stream of war and disaster news that is channelled into our homes day after day, and there's no denying that many of the images included are rather impressive. But while the text does its best to provide a nice context for the images, the issue is that there is perhaps nothing to separate this book from the many others of its kind available on the market. Books that pull together a variety of loosely connected images that attempt to demonstrate the beauty and wonder of our home planet always run the risk of feeling a little empty and superficial. Unfortunately, that is the overall impression that this book leaves.



BOOK



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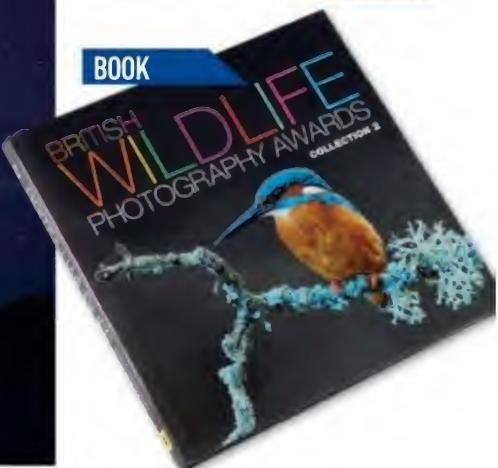
British Wildlife Photography Awards Collection 2

Edited by Paul Mitchell, AA Publishing, £25, 224 pages, hardback, ISBN 978-0749571153

THE BRITISH Wildlife Photography Awards is now in its third year and has done much to establish itself as a useful platform for both emerging and established professional photographers. The awards were set up in response to the growing awareness of the photographic community to the changes that are taking place in our environment. Through the images that are produced for this competition viewers are able to fully comprehend how crucial it is to document and protect the world we live in. This year's winning image was taken by marine biologist Richard Shucksmith, whose striking photograph of a purple jellyfish (above) revealed the magical qualities of a form of life that still seems so alien to us. But Shucksmith's image is just one of many in this beautifully produced book and each is more than worthy of inclusion.



BOOK



EXHIBITION

**The Alchemy of Light: Photography**

by Colin Homes and printmaking by Eugen Jarych
Until 1 December, FifeSpace Gallery, Rothes Halls, Glenrothes KY7 5NX. Tel: 01592 611101. Website: www.onfife.com. Open Mon-Sat 10am-5pm. Admission free

EVERY so often a photographer's work leaves such an impact it remains in your head for days and even weeks after you've seen it. If this sounds a little over the top, take a look at Colin Homes' photographs (www.colinhomes.com) and you'll see what I mean. Beautifully seen and exquisitely printed, Colin's black & white images capture every last detail and skilfully balance light and shadow. His subjects include university cloisters and church interiors as well as tranquil, hazy skies and rocky vistas. An

exhibition focusing on Colin's landscape and timescape work is currently taking place in the new FotoSpace Gallery inside Rothes Halls, Glenrothes, where around 45 prints are on display. In the adjacent FifeSpace Gallery, printmaker Eugen Jarych has 47 black & white prints on show. Although the exhibitions are separate, they complement each other through the artists' shared love of working in black & white and using traditional printmaking techniques.

Gemma Padley

www.pictorymag.com

PHOTOGRAPHER Laura Brunow Miner describes her website as 'a showcase for your best photo stories'. It's a basic enough idea, but the potential results are myriad and, most importantly, inspiring. The starting point is a theme, such as Local Legends. Readers of the website can then submit an image they feel encapsulates said theme. This leads to all manner of imagery – photos that run the whole gamut of life and global culture. Some are absurd, some are moving and some are clever interpretations. The fact that each photographer is only able to submit one image makes the task of addressing the theme all the more interesting. Every image is selected by Miner and judging from the content of the site she has an excellent eye for imagery.



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CONDENSED READING

A round-up of the latest photography books on the market



● **MUMMERS, MAYPOLES AND MILKMAIDS** by Sara Hannant, £19.95

The English have a reputation for being somewhat eccentric, and looking at this book – subtitled *A Journey Through the English Ritual Year* – it's easy to see why. Sara Hannant's photographs illustrate more than 50 folk rituals performed across the country and reveal a side of us that must have other countries scratching their heads in bemusement. Still, it's an interesting read. ● **FOCUS ON**



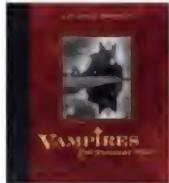
LIGHTING PHOTOS by Fil Hunter and Robin Reid, £12.99

Lighting Photos is a pretty broad subject and this book could have perhaps benefited from honing its subject down to one or two techniques. But that's not to say the information within the pages is of no benefit. If you're looking for a decent stocking filler for someone new to photography, you could do worse. ● **POSING FOR**



PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY by Jeff Smith, £24.99

This book tries to help you achieve the best results when directing your models. Alternatively, this book will be of equal worth if you are, in fact, the model being photographed. The sections run through each part of the body and the most appealing ways that they can be displayed within images. ● **VAMPIRES**



by Sir Simon Marsden, £20

Vampires get a bit of a bad press. Apart from their partiality to murder, blood drinking and Bauhaus records, what have they ever really done to deserve such a negative stigma? This book looks to redress the intrigue and mystery of the vampire through a series of infrared photographs and excellent text concerning locations associated with vampiric mythology. Pretty interesting.

Letters

Share your views and opinions with fellow AP readers every week

LETTER OF THE WEEK

Wins a 20-roll pack of 36-exposure Fujifilm Superia ISO 200 35mm film or a Fujifilm 4GB media card*



FUJIFILM

WORLD'S WORST CRIMINAL

I'm glad Gordon Wright's account of having his Nikon D700 stolen had a happy ending (Letters, AP 22 October). Fortunately, so did my own experience when some light-fingered character took a shine to my digital compact camera. I was in a pub and stupidly placed it on a table while I paid for drinks. Seconds later, I noticed the camera had gone.

So too was a shifty guy who'd been there when I'd put the camera down. I told another customer what had happened and he said he'd seen the suspect going into the gents. I had my pal Gary with me so we warily entered the toilet, but there was no one there – or so we thought. From one of the cubicles came the familiar beeping sound that my camera makes when scrolling through the images.

Gary went into the next cubicle, stood on the toilet seat, looked over and there was our man sat on the loo cheekily flicking through the pictures I'd shot that day. Suddenly, Gary yelled, 'Seen any you like?' What happened next was like something from a *Carry On* movie. The thief let out a yell of fright, wrenched open the door and pushed me backwards, dropping my camera in the process (but with no damage to me or the camera, thankfully). In his panic he slipped on the wet floor, whereupon a pile of coins fell from his pocket. He didn't hang about to pick them up and raced off like a bat out of hell.

My mate and I stood and laughed until we cried – and even more so when we went back into the bar to find out the thief had also fallen over a table in his haste to escape. We went back and picked up the loose change he'd dropped and put it in the charity box. Sadly, there's no CCTV footage of the incident. But it would have been a cert for *You've Been Framed!* or, better still, *The World's Worst Criminals*. Hapless doesn't begin to describe him.

Alex Dixon, Northumberland

THE COURAGE TO FORGIVE

I visited a pub near Bangor station in North Wales as I had some time to wait for my train and noticed an advert for a beer called Spitfire. The accompanying slogan said:

'No Fokker comes close!' Immediately, I was reminded of the very sad letter of the week sent in by Dr Collins (AP 22 October) regarding the V-1 rockets of the Second World War and Nikon's new CSC. We should

What The Duck



learn from history, but also have the courage to forgive. Germany and Japan have given us some excellent cameras over the years, and I give them thanks. **Peter Bell, Merseyside**

Most things can be forgotten after a few pints of Spitfire – Damien Demolder, Editor

FUNNY OLD WORLD

Like Dr David Collins, I remember very well the V-1 Doodlebug flying bomb (Letters, AP 22 October). But Nikon is a Japanese firm, and V1 does not have the same resonance in Japan that it has in the UK.

As an aside, I was evacuated with my school to a town in Kent. In 1944, this area became known as Doodlebug Alley since the RAF were shooting down the weapons before they could reach London. As a result, we ventured back to London in September where we then faced the much more terrifying V-2 rockets. Funny old world, isn't it? **Raymond Hill, Essex**

NO CHOICE

In response to Sam Rowlands' letter in AP 22 October, I would like to point out that I am not anti-EVF. I have tried the Sony Alpha 55 when I was looking to buy a new camera earlier this year and I quite liked it. In the end, I rejected it for other reasons, namely lens compatibility, the small size of the body and poor battery life.

What my gripe is with Sony is that it isn't offering all its current users a choice, other than to take it or leave it. I read the AP review of the Alpha 77 in AP 15 October and accept that it is a step forward in camera design and technology, but it doesn't have to be the way forward. I don't believe a traditional camera manufacturer, as opposed to an electronics company, would take this route.

And as an aside, why is it that no one seems to be mentioning the firmware problems and camera lock-ups with the Alpha 65 and 77? It seems that Sony imported and released the first batch with preproduction firmware, and there have been instances of further problems with the latest release, version 1.03. These problems have been widely discussed on web forums, yet Sony has still to acknowledge there is anything wrong! In my opinion, it is another case of Sony being too big to be bothered. **Graeme Stewart, Glasgow**

A NEW LEASE OF LIFE

After reading your letters pages in AP 22 October and looking at the gorgeous Rollei QZ, I got to thinking that surely the technology exists to be able to manufacture a digital sensing unit that could fit inside all 'older' 35mm cameras. The electronic 'gizmo thingies' would fit inside the space normally occupied by the film canister with the sensor mounted on a thin sheet of titanium (or something) in between. The other chamber (wind-on) can then be used to house the battery (imagine along the lines of the old 126 cartridges). A simple USB cable attachment could be employed

MUCH-NEEDED INSPIRATION

I have found your book, *Advanced Photography: Camera Skills* (free with AP 22 October), inspirational. It has taken me back 50 years to when I enjoyed photography with my first camera and the subsequent film years. My first (camera, not love, although...) was a Kodak Retina with a Xenar lens and Compur Rapid Shutter that I purchased in Leadenhall Street in 1959. I wish I had kept it! I have now returned to photography after a gap of a quarter of a century, but cannot find the same creativity with my digital Canon EOS 20D. However, I believe that your book will be the catalyst to get me back to this wonderful hobby. I love the originality and quality of the photographs – they remind me of what I tried to achieve long ago (if only I had come close). I will now try again. Thank you.

Graham Cole, Derbyshire

I'm very pleased you like it – Damien Demolder, Editor

to download the photographs or feed an external stick-on monitor!

Even though I own a Nikon D7000, which appears to have 1,001 things I will never need, it would be great to pick up some of the classic cameras, drop in the unit and have all the basic controls necessary, plus the use of a mechanical shutter. My old Nikon F2 awaits!

Nick Woodrow, Devon

There almost was one once, but the maker discovered that the distance between the film canister chamber and the film gate is different for almost every camera – Damien Demolder, Editor

IN PRAISE OF DIVERSITY

I was interested by Damien Demolder's leader regarding Sony as a player in the SLR market (AP 15 October). While many Alpha shooters might have wanted an Alpha 700 replacement sooner, or more weather-sealing, Sony has been quite good at looking after certain aspects of its range: it has only used three batteries (one of which fits the majority of bodies); it has made sure that any Alpha lens going back 25 years (APS-C or full-frame) can be used, including its autofocus, on any Alpha DSLR (including the last generation of Minolta film bodies); and it has supplied a range of cheap prime lenses that are of decent optical quality (a genuine macro for under £150).

Damien seems to assume that the only people shooting Alpha are old Minoltarians like himself. There are still a fair few of those, and some have switched to other brands over time, but the availability of image stabilisation on any lens, plus good handling and good value for money, as well as perhaps the attraction of not being one of the 'obvious' SLR brands, means that Sony has picked up quite a few brand-new users (along with some converts from the big two). Diversity in camera manufacturers should



be viewed as a good thing by all consumers. As long as Sony and Pentax are around, they will push up the bar for Canon and Nikon users. All power as well to Olympus, Panasonic and Samsung – I would not want to see any of them go the way of Konica Minolta.

Bob Janes, via email

Quite right, too – Damien Demolder, Editor

GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME

I read with interest Tim Coleman's Nikon Coolpix P7100 camera test in AP 22 October, mainly because I got wind of the camera's imminent arrival four weeks after buying a P7000.

Tim wrote a very fair and thorough report on the new arrival, highlighting its improvements over the previous model. The new control wheel on the front of the P7100 would be an advantage, albeit one I can get by without, but at the end of the day I found myself thinking, as a confirmed JPEG shooter, is a tiltable screen and faster processing, plus one or two cosmetic tweaks, worth an extra £150 to me? The answer is a resounding no. The P7000 does what I want it to do, and does it very well indeed. My camera came with the latest firmware, so probably processes fine JPEGs faster than the early models, and I certainly don't regret my purchase. The new arrival may offer improved performance for raw shooters, but for me the P7000 fits the bill perfectly.

And if I might add something to the compact camera optical viewfinder debate, despite some reviewers commenting on the P7000's poor optical viewfinder, on a number of occasions, without first realising it, I found myself using the camera held up to my eye and getting on very nicely with it. Ah, the good old days!

Terry Campbell, Moray

BACK CHAT

Gary Beaton ponders whether just clicking on a button is as satisfying as a more hands-on approach

REGARDLESS of how our interest in photography originated or developed, we all have one thing in common – it's about capturing images, whether we take pictures with the latest SLR or an old compact. Of course, in the old days we captured the picture on film and then often disappeared into the darkroom to print our final image that we hoped would be worthy of sharing with others.

Of course, the image captured on the film sometimes – maybe often – wasn't quite what we expected or hoped for... and then the fun began. I remember dodging and burning as I printed to improve the final image, and experimenting with some incredibly malodorous chemicals as I sought to tint and tone my prints. Then there was the time when printing the rebate around an image – to show that the image was composed in the camera – came into vogue. Off I went into the darkroom to make composites of frame rebates and artistically cropped shots in the hope of convincing friends and family that I too was able to capture the moment in the viewfinder!

Over the years there were some amazing special effects to try. Starburst and sunset effects were just a couple of the filters that had a place in my camera bag. Sometimes a specific camera or lens was necessary to achieve a particular effect. I was once lucky enough to use a tilt-and-shift lens, which cost an absolute fortune! More easily attainable were pinholes – both complete cameras as well as 'lenses'. And Lomography is great fun.

Film choice sometimes was also key in achieving the desired result. Did I need a gritty, fast, black & white emulsion or was I looking for one offering a smooth, fine-grained negative to produce my final image? I could choose between colour films offering bright, highly saturated transparencies or pick one to give me more natural colours.

I've tried my hand at lith printing – trialling various different combinations of paper and developer to achieve just the ethereal image I have in mind. Other printed images have benefited from toning in a range of chemicals designed for the purpose, as well as a few less specialised baths such as tea, coffee and soy sauce.

These days I've gone digital for most of my photography. All the effects that I tried to create on film and in the darkroom can be achieved with image-editing programs. Sometimes what took hours in the darkroom or was just not affordable can be achieved with a simple click of a button. I can download plug-ins to apply effects and make it look like I used a particular film stock, while putting a rebate or other frame around my shots is as easy as pie.

The trouble is, every now and then it seems that all the enjoyment has been taken out. As a good friend pointed out to me, the destination may be the goal, but sometimes the journey is half the fun.

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PHOTO INSIGHT

**Heather Angel explains
how she took this shot
of a hoverfly pollinating
a lily and highlights
the importance of
practical flash use**



HEATHER ANGEL

An internationally renowned photographer of the natural world and author of more than 50 books, Heather brings her expertise to AP

To see more images by Heather, visit www.heatherangel.co.uk or www.naturalvisions.co.uk. Heather regularly runs workshops at the British Wildlife Centre. For information on courses run by Heather and her son Giles, visit www.photographyandphotoshopcourses.co.uk



I GENERALLY find that I'm able to get many of my most interesting shots when I'm not out looking for them. The image you see here was taken at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, just before a workshop that I was due to conduct with a small group. I had arrived there early and found this gorgeous lily near the lab where I was working. I took a wander around and found it under a tree.

What caught my eye at first was not so much the insects that were flying around, but the fact that it was a species of lily I had previously photographed in China. The flower grows at between 500 and 2,000 metres (1,640–6,560ft), and when I originally saw it in China I was driving along the road and found it growing from a crevice in a large vertical rock. I just had to stop to photograph it. It was lovely finding it again at Kew and I decided to photograph it while I had a few spare moments.

When I got a little closer I began to notice these little hoverflies flitting around and feeding on the pollen (appropriately, hoverflies are also sometimes called flower flies). I had originally intended to shoot the flower by itself, but once I saw the hoverflies interacting with the flower I realised that, photographically, they would be a perfect fit to get a nice shot. It was interesting to see such a small insect being dwarfed by this huge flower while at the same time engaging in an act that was mutually beneficial and necessary for the wider environment. To me, this interdependence was as interesting as the insect and the flower, maybe more so.

I shot at 1/250sec at f/8 and used fill flash from a Nikon Speedlight SB-900, all on a Nikon D3 DSLR with Nikkor 105mm



lens. I also used a Honl softbox, which is something I've mentioned before. Some Velcro strips are fitted around the edges of a flashgun and this miniature softbox is then attached to the end. It's a really neat little device and so much better, I find, than the Sto-Fen diffusers that also attach to flashguns because the Honl gives a better spread of diffused light that almost has the appearance of natural light. The last thing that anyone wants is for someone to look

at images of flowers and insects and know right away that they were taken with flash. My thinking is that flash is there to give images an appearance of naturalism. There's nothing worse than seeing an otherwise good shot that has been ruined by the poor application of flash. When it becomes obvious that flash was used, the illusion and spell of the image are broken.

When I first started taking pictures of this lily at Kew, the hoverflies were coming



© Heather Angel

and going, and feeding on the flower's nectar and pollen. The thing that particularly grabbed my interest was that one of the hoverflies had pollen stuck to its feet. To feed on the pollen the hoverflies must stand on the male part of the flower, called the stamen. These stamens produce large amounts of pollen, the grains of which are rather big in comparison to the small body of the hoverfly. As conditions can be a bit sticky, the hoverfly ends up flying around

with pollen stuck to its legs. The fly then moves to another flower with all this pollen and lands on that flower's pistil (the female part) or, more specifically, the end, which is called a stigma. That's the basic process of cross-pollination, although it can also occur when pollen is carried on the wind.

Pollination is a vital process within our environment and readers can do a lot to assist it by ensuring they have a wide variety of flowers and foliage within their own

gardens. It provides the perfect environment for pollinators such as hoverflies and bees, and also gives photographers an excellent place to study the wonderful colours and shapes that can be found in the natural world. Your own back garden is one of the most vibrant environments for photography, and despite being a small contained area it can take a long time to fully explore.

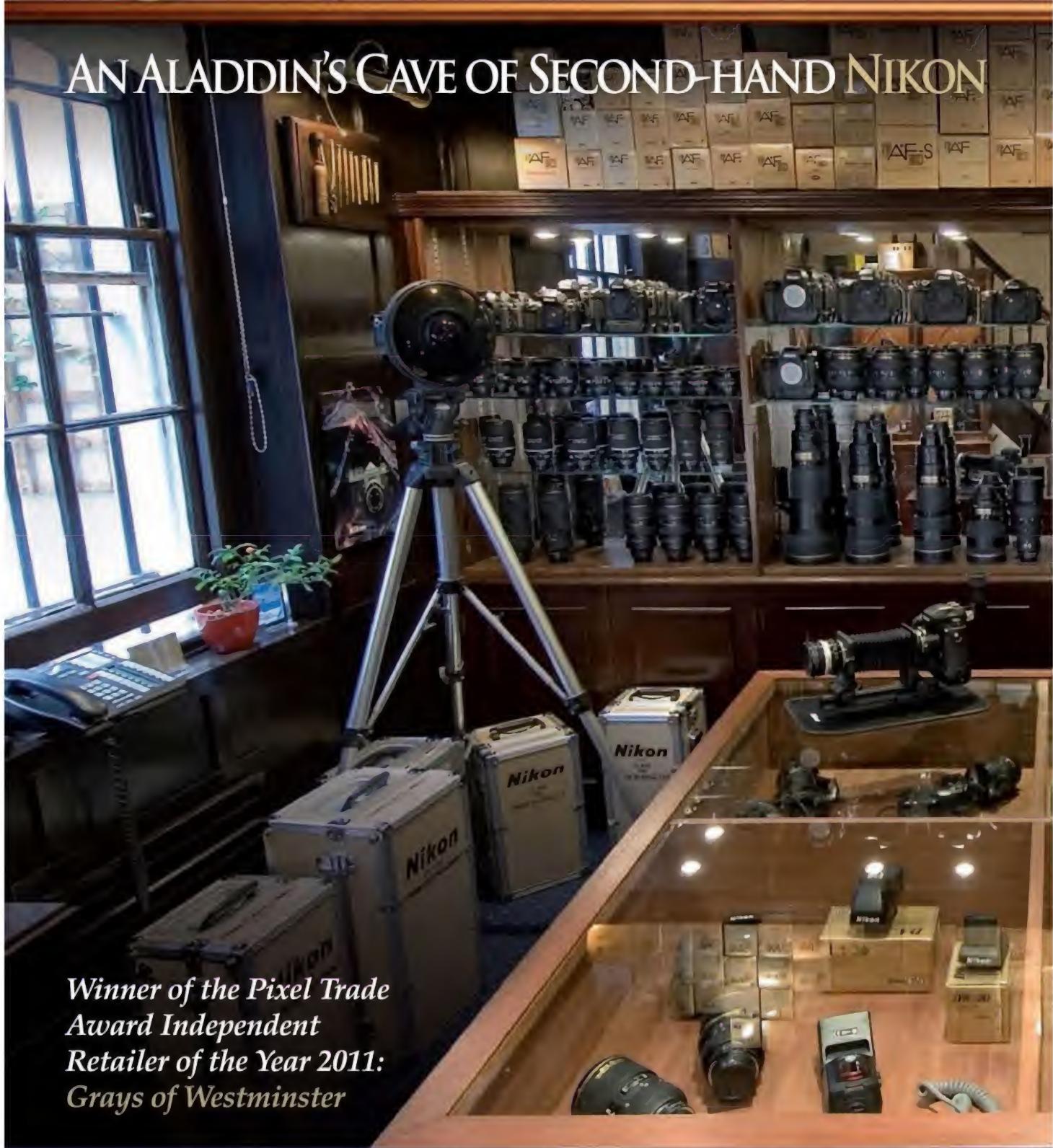
Heather Angel was talking to Oliver Atwell

A hoverfly approaches the stamen of a lily to feed on the flower's pollen

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Wildlife

The Amateur Photographer Masterclass with **Paul Hobson**

**LEARN
FROM THE
EXPERTS**

Wildlife photographer **Paul Hobson** shows three readers the best ways to take macro images of native and exotic insects with a basic studio set-up. **Oliver Atwell** joins them

TAKING successful macro photographs of insects is never an easy task. When on location conditions can be unpredictable, with the slightest breeze ruining an otherwise perfect shot. However, there is a solution. Simply transport your subjects indoors to ensure you have the necessary time and control over your environment.

This month's location is the photographic studio within the basement of London's Blue Fin Building, home of AP. 'This studio has a range of lights and stands that we can use,' says Paul. 'But the important thing to remember is that these same set-ups can

be achieved at home using desk lamps and tabletops. This is something we covered in my previous *Masterclass* in AP 13 August. We're going to be working with a range of praying mantis, stick insects, leaf insects and fruit beetles. These are all creatures from rainforests around the world that can easily be bought in pet shops or over the internet. They're bred in captivity, so they're not taken out of the wild.'

Paul points out that while the *Masterclass* attendees will be working with exotic creatures, the same photographic principles apply to insects that are native to the UK. 'We're using exotic insects because it will

give our images an added level of interest,' says Paul. 'But all the techniques that we'll be using also apply to common insects such as earwigs and spiders.'

As the subjects are so small, the only lens that can truly do justice to such intricate and interesting creatures is a macro lens, and each reader has brought one with them, plus a sturdy tripod.

'We're going to be investigating how to achieve the best focus for close, sharp shots,' says Paul. 'That will then lead us on to choosing the most appropriate aperture, shutter speed and ISO. Add that to learning how to create balanced light using flash, and we should get some nice images.'

On that note, Paul fires up the studio lights and opens the first of the containers. A praying mantis pops its head over the top and readies itself for its 15 minutes of fame.



Your AP Master...

Paul Hobson



Paul studied environmental science at Sheffield University and has worked as an environmental sciences lecturer for 25 years. With more than 20 years' photography experience behind him, Paul was specially commended in the 2008 Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition and two of his images were exhibition finalists in the British Wildlife Photography Awards 2009. Paul regularly lectures on wildlife photography and also runs workshops. www.paulhobson.co.uk



The AP readers...

Lucas Crowson



Lucas enjoys shooting low-contrast urban photography, but is also branching out into other areas such as wildlife. He uses an Olympus Pen E-P1 and OM-2 with a variety of lenses and bellows. 'I've had a lot of fun,' says Lucas. 'It's been excellent working with so many interesting insects.'

Simon Crowson



Simon's principal interest is wildlife photography, specifically bees. He uses an Olympus E-3 and E-520 with a 50mm macro lens and ringflash. 'It's been great,' says Simon. 'I'll take a great deal away from today and apply it to my work in the future.'

Philip Pound



Philip photographs a variety of subjects, but his real interest is in wildlife. He uses a Canon EOS-1D Mark III with Canon 100mm macro lens and extension tubes. 'I learned a lot today,' says Philip. 'The most important thing I took from this was how important it is to use a tripod.'

Macro

AS THE attendees are working with flash, they have much more freedom with their camera settings. 'As we're using macro lenses, being able to experiment with settings is crucial,' says Paul. 'If we were shooting using a standard wideangle or telephoto lens, the process would be a little more straightforward. However, as we're so close to our subjects and working with a fairly limited depth of field, any mistakes will be glaringly obvious.'

Paul recommends starting with a wide aperture and then gradually making it smaller to see how much coverage the lens can provide.

'The most important things to get in focus are the eyes and head of the insect, as we'll discuss in more detail later,' he says. 'There's no definite answer about the optimal setting. It's going to depend entirely on a combination of factors, such as light, shutter speed and even what your individual camera is capable of. Don't be afraid to make the aperture smaller. If you're working with an aperture of f/8, try pushing it to f/11 and see what you get. It's important to bear in mind, though, that having portions of your image out of focus is an appealing facet of macro photography, particularly the background. Having the background thrown out of focus will make your subject stand out and draw the viewer's eye to what's important.'

Using flash is a great help when shooting small subjects that are unlikely to stay still for long. As Paul points out, insects don't tend to take stage directions.

'Flash illumination will ensure that you can keep your ISO low and your shutter speeds high,' he explains. 'Keeping your ISO low will mean you can retain the levels of detail that you want from such an interesting subject. Maintaining a fast shutter speed, such as 1/160sec, means you won't have to worry about blurred images. Subjects like the praying mantis are very intelligent and watchful creatures. They constantly move around to see what you're up to. When you're faced with such an active creature, you need fast shutter speeds to make sure you get your shots.'

Paul is keen to point out how crucial it is to use a



tripod when dealing with this kind of photography. Lacking this vital piece of kit can ruin a shot.

'I work with a lot of budding wildlife photographers who have trouble adapting to the use of a tripod,' he says. 'Using a tripod is a great way of ensuring that your framing isn't sloppy and is perfectly aligned. I can't emphasise enough how important it is. You also have to consider that you are working with a very limited depth of field, so the slightest tilt forwards or backwards will place your focus point on the wrong area. In most cases, the focal point should be the eyes. If you're shooting handheld and you're rocking backwards and forwards, it's going to be incredibly difficult to focus on the right area. The result may be a number of shots where the subject is blurred and you didn't even realise it at the time of shooting.'

'Using flash is a great help when shooting subjects that don't stay still for long – insects don't tend to take stage directions'



SIMON CRONIN



PHILIP PUDDE

Flash

THOSE familiar with Paul's *Masterclass* articles will be aware of his feelings about using flash on live animals. While many shots of small animals will be impossible to get without employing flash, it's important to use it sparingly.

'I have always maintained that the excessive use of flash on small animals does them harm,' says Paul. 'I know not everyone agrees with me, so it's up to the individual photographer to decide the right thing to do. If you walk into an aquarium there will usually be signs telling you not to use flash because it can kill the fish. If the fish are being exposed to those intense bursts of light hour after hour, day after day, then it is going to hurt them. This is especially true of the tiny subjects we're using today.'

So with that in mind, our *Masterclass* attendees are using flash – or fill-in flash to be specific – in moderation, to help even out the balance of light and soften the shadows. Combined with the standard overhead lighting of a bulb (the same

kind you'd have in your living room or kitchen), fill-in flash should be a perfect source of illumination.

'As we're going quite close in and using macro, we have to think about how we use flash,' says Paul. 'It's so easy to blow out your subject, especially when it's this small. The best thing to do is to have your flash off-camera and hold it up at an angle pointed down towards your subject. Make sure that you keep it diffused. Essentially, you want a miniature softbox in your hands.'

Another option to consider is using a ringflash, which is a circular flash unit that fits around your lens. This is often used in macro photography as it provides even illumination and dramatically reduces shadows.

'Using ring flash means that the light is coming in from various angles, much like it would with a softbox,' says Paul. 'Also, because the flash is so close to the lens, the shadows disappear. However, you should be careful only to use it as fill flash. If you use it as your main source of illumination, your backgrounds will be dark. Basically, a ringflash is a really handy tool.'



SIMON CRONIN

ON THE LEVEL

IN PREVIOUS wildlife *Masterclasses*, Paul has stressed how important it is to match the subject's eye level, but does this rule still apply when working with insects that, in some cases, seem to be an almost abstract collection of shapes?

'The same rule applies to insects as it does to any other animal – it's crucial to get on the same level,' says Paul. 'When you get down to the insect's level, it's like living in their world. It wasn't always like that, though. Old-fashioned photographers didn't like to get down and lie on the ground to match the animal's eye level. Everything was shot from above with the camera angled down towards the animal. Then photographers started to understand that facing the creature head-on drew you into their life and produced much more intimate shots.'



SIMON CRONIN



Set-up and lighting

AN IMPORTANT consideration when shooting these subjects is how you go about arranging your set and lighting it.

'One of the best tools that you can have at your disposal is a clamp stand,' says Paul. 'The stands can be quite expensive, but the clamps that attach to the stands can be bought on the internet for £25-£30. You can easily make a stand yourself with some of the everyday objects you have lying around the home. Then you can attach the clamp and use that to hold your plants in place.'

With regards to lighting, you'll find that desk lamps provide a more than suitable amount of coverage.

'We've seen in previous *Masterclass* articles that desk lamps provide more than enough illumination for macro,' says Paul. 'As we're using flash as well, we'll have plenty of light for our small subjects. It's worth experimenting with how close you put your light to your subject, as bulb intensities can vary. Also, keep an eye on the white balance and make sure that the colours are true to life. Your camera's auto white balance will not always get it right, so you may have to use the manual controls.'





PHILIP ROUND

BRINGING plants indoors and placing them on an elevated surface, such as a tabletop, allows you to arrange them in a suitable way.

'As you're going in quite close, you don't need anything too elaborate,' says Paul. 'A simple bundle of reeds and plants will fill the frame. The trick with studio-based macro photography is to make your shots appear as if they were taken in the wild, and when you're getting in so close that's not too difficult to achieve.'

According to Paul, you must always consider if your set is going to be complementary to your subject.

'We have a green mantis, so we're going to want green vegetation,' says Paul. 'That's a mutually complementary combination. You should also consider the kinds of

plants you will be using. For example, you wouldn't want to put a mantis on a cutting from a Scot's pine tree – you want something that has a slightly exotic feel with interesting shapes and textures.'

Another important consideration is the background. 'The simplest thing to do is to get hold of some coloured card,' says Paul. 'We're keeping it simple today by using just green, white and black. If you go online or flick through a book and look at the various macro shots taken, you'll generally find that these three background colours crop up more than any others. Green is obviously due to vegetation, white is a result of the sky or empty space, and black could simply be the result of night-time photography or the use of flash.'



Would you like to take part?

EVERY month we invite three to five AP readers to join one of our three experts on a free assignment over the course of a day, with food and refreshments provided. The experts are **Tom Mackie** (nature and wildlife), **Cathal McNaughton** (documentary and photo essays) and **Annabel Williams** (studio and location portraiture). Our next *Masterclasses* are in the process of preparation, but if you would like to take part visit www.amateurphotographer.co.uk/masterclass for details of how to apply. Please remember to state which *Masterclass* you would like to attend and make sure you include your name, address, email address, daytime telephone number and two or three examples of your work (preferably in your application). Each participant will be able to use his or her own equipment.



LUCAS FRONZON

AFTER THE SHOOT

IF YOU decide to buy exotic insects to use in your macro shots, what do you do with them when the shoot is over?

'The key thing to remember is not to release animals that are not native to our country into the wild,' says Paul. 'The release of exotic animals into the British Isles is illegal. There have been occasions in the past when misguided individuals have wreaked havoc in this country by releasing foreign species into the wild. A while ago, some American mink escaped from a fur farm and began populating the countryside. They are largely responsible for driving out the water vole population from their natural habitat. This gives you some idea as to the devastation that an exotic species can cause. As these species have no natural predators in Britain, they can easily outcompete our native creatures.'

If anyone wants to use exotic insects for their project, they must consider

what to do with them after the shoot. One option is to borrow them from a pet shop and return them after the shoot. Another idea is to keep them as pets.

'These creatures are incredibly easy to look after,' says Paul. 'Horsehead grasshoppers and stick insects feed on brambles, which are in leaf all year round. Plus many of these species don't live for long. The praying mantis only lives for six months and the fruit beetles live for between eight and ten weeks.'

Whatever you decide to photograph, make sure you consider the animal's welfare. Also, have an idea about what you plan to do with the animal afterwards. If in doubt, do not buy an animal that you cannot care for afterwards. If you plan to use native insects, such as earwigs and spiders, make sure you handle them with care and return them to the area where you found them as quickly as possible.

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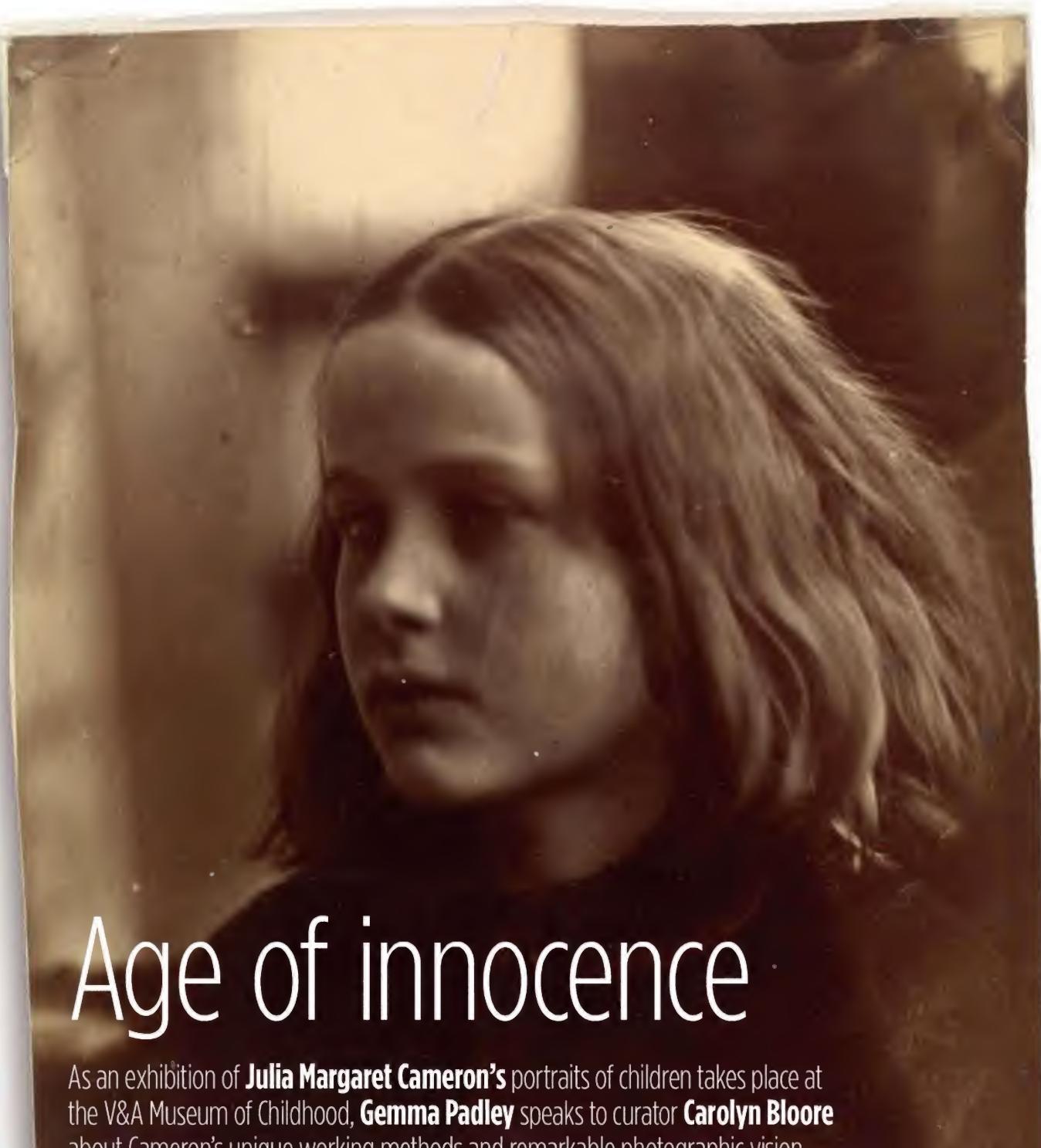
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Age of innocence

As an exhibition of **Julia Margaret Cameron's** portraits of children takes place at the V&A Museum of Childhood, **Gemma Padley** speaks to curator **Carolyn Bloore** about Cameron's unique working methods and remarkable photographic vision

HIGH ceilings and a majestic wrought-iron structure unfold overhead, while the chatter of animated voices rings throughout. This is the V&A's Museum of Childhood in Bethnal Green, London, which is an impressive example of Victorian public architecture. The building was the original Kensington

Museum (the equivalent of the V&A Museum) built after the Great Exhibition of 1851, which moved to Bethnal Green over a four-year period from 1868-72. The museum became the Museum of Childhood in 1974.

There is surely no better place to exhibit Julia Margaret Cameron's photographs

of children, and this small but unique exhibition features 20 prints from the V&A collection. It is the first exhibition of its kind dedicated to Julia Margaret Cameron's portraits of children. 'The exhibition is an expression of mid-Victorian childhood,' says Carolyn Bloore, who curates the exhibition

'Annie Philpot aged 7', January 1864. This was Julia Margaret Cameron's 'first success', taken only weeks after she was given a camera

 and has worked at the V&A for many years. 'The photographs featured in the exhibition were taken between 1864 and 1872. The photograph considered to be her very first "success", featuring Annie Philpot [see page 29], is the first image visitors will see.'

STARTING OUT

Cameron didn't take up photography until she was 48 years old. She was given a wooden box camera by her daughter Julia and her son-in-law Charles Norman during Christmas of 1863. Born in Calcutta, India, in 1815, Cameron moved to England in 1848 when her husband Charles retired. In 1860, the family moved to the Isle of Wight, where they bought two cottages, which were later joined together to become Dimbola Lodge (now a museum dedicated to the work of Julia Margaret Cameron).

It was during this time that Cameron embarked upon her most intensive period of photography in which she produced some of her most celebrated portrait photographs, including many of children. Cameron had six children and adopted five others – she was a mother, an aunt and a grandmother, and children were a huge part of her life.

'She was immersed in children,' says Carolyn. 'More than 200 of her photographs are portraits of children, and that excludes those in which children were an additional part of the composition. She chose to incorporate children into her photographs to a greater extent than anyone else at that time.'

INSPIRATIONS AND THEMES

Mixing in elite social circles, Cameron knew many eminent artists, scientists and literary figures of the day. She almost always knew her subjects, who were often the children of poets and other artistic figures, and sometimes the children of neighbours. Stylistically, Cameron's images draw heavily on Pre-Raphaelite paintings, as the subjects often have flowers in their hair or are surrounded by flowers and have swathes of material draped around them. Their expressions and poses also draw on romantic traditions, and are frequently whimsical and melancholic in mood.

Cameron also took inspiration from



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'Circe', c1865.

Barely 10 years old, Kate Keown is portrayed as the enchantress from Homer's *Odyssey* who lured sailors



Far left: 'Three women and child', 1865. Although this seamed tableau includes elements of a memento mori, Percy Keown is merely sleeping. An experimental combination of two glass plates

Left: 'Paul and Virginia', 1864. Cameron's search for perfection led her to scratch away some of the collodion to correct the proportion of Freddy Gould's feet

Right: 'Florence Fisher', 1872. Cameron's great niece gazes unblinkingly over the darkness of the rose leaves

Below left: 'Freddy Gould', 1866. A favourite of Cameron's sitters, Freddy Gould was able to sit still for extended times

literary sources, sometimes choosing to portray characters from fiction both ancient (Homer's *Odyssey*, for example) and contemporary (poems written by her poet friends). For example, in the image 'Circe' (see opposite page), her subject Kate Keown is depicted as the enchantress from Homer's *Odyssey* who lured sailors with honey and magic.

Religious and moral themes often appeared in Cameron's work, but she also touched on darker themes such as death. 'Death in childhood was part of life in the Victorian era,' says Carolyn. 'Infant mortality was high and a large number of children wouldn't reach adulthood.' In some of the images the line between sleep and death is blurred, such as in the photograph 'Three women and child' (see far left). The image, which is a collage of two photographs, is reminiscent of a memento mori and there is something unsettling about it. Cameron occasionally experimented with compositions of this sort.

RADICAL APPROACH

At the time Cameron was working, photography was becoming increasingly accessible to the public, and as an industry it was expanding at a rapid pace. 'It was an exciting time,' says Carolyn. 'Cameron experimented with the irregularities of the wet-plate collodion process. What is different about her way of working is the fact that she chose to include the blots and marks caused by the process, and make them part of her image. In one photograph she selectively removed parts of the collodion to improve the composition. Carte de visites (small card photographs) with their



HOW CAMERON WORKED

Colin Ford is founding head of the National Museum of Photography, Film & Television in Bradford, West Yorkshire, and curator, writer and expert on Julia Margaret Cameron. He offers an insight into Cameron's working methods

Julia Margaret Cameron created albumen silver prints using the wet-plate collodion process. The glass plates were coated in collodion (a solution of gun cotton, ether and alcohol mixed with salts) and made sensitive to light in the darkroom using silver-nitrate salts. These were placed in the camera and exposed while wet. They were then washed, fixed using either hypo or cyanide and coated in varnish. There was a considerable amount of work involved in preparing the plates. Cameron would have bought the glass plates, mixed the chemicals and poured them onto the glass. You had to pour the chemicals evenly across the surface and the plates were only photosensitive when they were wet, so you had to take the photograph before the plate dried out. It was a complicated, cumbersome process.

The prints are large and the negatives would have been the same size, so the negative determined the size of the print. Cameron's first camera took 11x9in glass plates, and she later had a 15x12in camera. These were heavy pieces of equipment and not the kind of thing you could carry around. We don't know the make of her camera, but we do know she used a French Jamin lens. This had a fixed aperture of f/3.6 and a focal length of around 12in. Using this lens with a camera of that size would cause a fall-off in the focus at the edges, so part of the softly focused aesthetic of her images is due to the equipment she used. Of course, the exposures would have been several minutes, not seconds. This is another reason why her photographs are sometimes blurred – it is not easy to sit still for minutes!

Cameron's portraits of children are a particular triumph. It must have been an intimidating experience for the children being in front of a camera of that size, but her subjects look relaxed and natural. Occasionally, Cameron took two or three shots until she was happy, but on the whole it would have been a one-shot process – you either got it right or you didn't. Cameron's darkroom was an old converted coal-house and contact prints would have been made in sunlight. She would sometimes trim the prints if there were faults due to the chemical process or for artistic reasons. However, Cameron embraced the imperfections of the process and often left these in her photographs. We don't know exactly what her studio was like but it may have been an old greenhouse, which she called 'the glass house'.



Above: 'The Whisper of the Muse', 1865. Victorian allegorical painter George Frederic Watts with Kate and Elizabeth Keown

Right: 'Charlotte Norman', c1864-1866. Cameron captures the expression of a moment in a compelling portrait

 sharpness and clarity were popular at the time, and the Daguerreotype was celebrated for its crispness and detail. In producing blurred, soft-focus images Cameron was going against the trends of the day.'

Cameron's aim was to elevate photography to the status of art, adds Carolyn. 'Some people criticised her photographic approach and methods, but the circle in which she was moving would have appreciated what she was doing,' she says. 'Nowadays, some of her images might be perceived as sensual, but they weren't seen as such at the time. She was exploring an idealistic view of childhood – its innocence, purity and love.'

USE OF LIGHT

Working in her 'glass house' and using natural light, Cameron would have draped pieces of material across the space to control how and where the light and shadows fell on her subject's face, explains Carolyn. In some of the photographs in the exhibition the lighting is diffuse, subtly illuminating the child's features with light and shadow perfectly balanced. In others, the lighting is more directional and used for a more contrasty effect. Occasionally, the effect is that of high key, such as in the image of Freddy Gould (page 30). 'Her use of lighting was very considered and thoughtful,' adds Carolyn.

COMPOSITION

Working at a time when exposures would have been several minutes long, Cameron's ability to create portraits in which the poses and expressions of her subjects are so natural was remarkable. 'She must have had a natural ability with children to achieve the photographs she did,' says Carolyn. 'It's amazing she could command such stillness.'



As one of her nieces once said: 'We never knew what aunt Julia was going to do next. Once in her clutches, we were perfectly helpless! Stand there, she would shout, and we stood there for hours if necessary.'

The subjects in Cameron's portraits of children sometimes look directly at the camera, sometimes to the side, and in some cases feature more than one subject. One particularly striking image is that of Cameron's great niece Florence Fisher (page 31), who looks directly at the viewer. The image is unnerving in its directness. In another, her granddaughter Charlotte Norman (above) gazes wistfully out of the frame, and in 'The Whisper of the Muse' (above left), two children are positioned either side of Victorian allegorical painter George Frederic Watts, forming a near-perfect diagonal across the frame. 'Cameron's images are compelling,' says Carolyn. 'They certainly command attention.'

'Cameron's ability to create portraits in which the poses and expressions of her subjects are so natural was remarkable'

EXHIBITION

JULIA Margaret Cameron: Photographs of Children is being held at the V&A Museum of Childhood, Cambridge Heath Road, London E2 0PA until 13 February 2012. Tel: 0208 983 5200. Website: www.vam.ac.uk/moc. Open daily 10am-5.45pm (closed 24-26 December and 1 January). Admission free.

For more information about Julia Margaret Cameron, visit www.dimbola.co.uk

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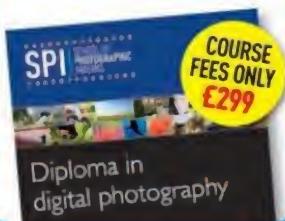
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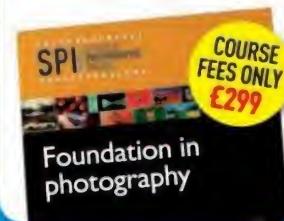
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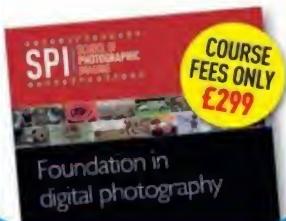
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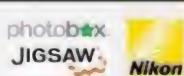
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Eric Emmerson Devon

Deciding that he was bored just looking at books featuring works by such photographers as Bill Brandt and Fay Godwin, Eric decided to treat himself to a Canon EOS 350D in late 2005 and take up the art of photography himself. Eric is an outdoors person, which is reflected in his work, and he is never happier than when strolling along a coastline. He enjoys finding beauty in the mundane and discovering new locations.



Boat

'I'm drawn to sights of dereliction and decay in nature,' says Eric. 'This shot allowed me to capture a sense of abandonment'

Canon EOS 5D, 16-35mm, 1/6secs at f/22, ISO 100, tripod

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2



**EDITOR'S
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There's a great atmosphere about this shot that's calming and relaxing. I love the background as much as the foreground wharf, with those low clouds hanging like smoke over the darkened hills. The low colour saturation makes it very easy to look at for a long time, too. Nice job, Eric - *Damien Demolder, Editor*

Wharf

2 Eric has captured the soft colours in the wharf on a gloomy day after a passing storm. The final HDR shot is a combination of three images blended in Photomatix Pro. Canon EOS 5D, 16-35mm, f/14, ISO 200, tripod

Pier

3 This shot of Fleetwood Pier on the Lancashire coast was taken just one month before it burned down. Again, this is an HDR image. Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 70-200mm, f/11, ISO 400, tripod

3



Laura Craddock

West Midlands

Laura sees photography as a way of assisting her other hobbies of walking and birdwatching. She is always looking to improve her technique, and to explore new photographic styles and perspectives. She particularly likes being able to show off the beautiful landscapes and wildlife this country has to offer. You can see more of Laura's photographs at www.flickr.com/photos/thetree thatfellinthewoods.

Three Cliffs Bay, Swansea

1 Laura's attempt to capture mid-winter afternoon sun has paid off in this image
Sony Alpha 100, 18-75mm, 1/100sec at f/10, ISO 200

Sea view, Anglesey

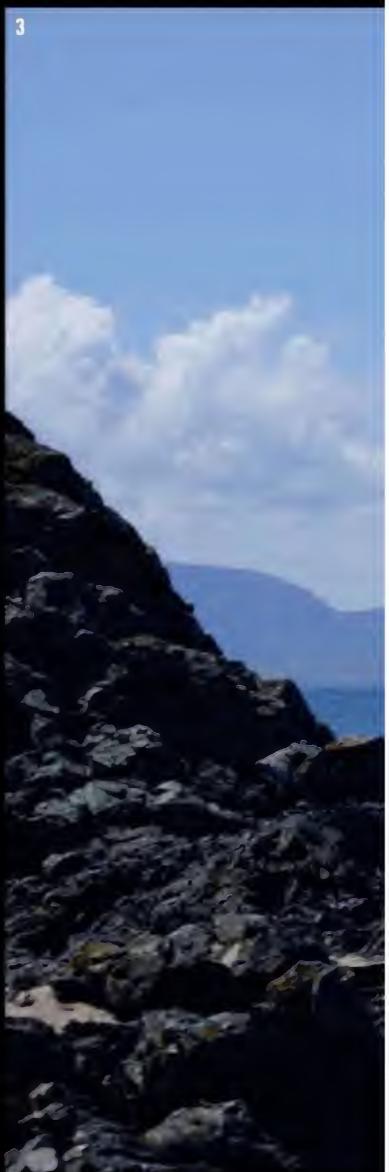
2 Laura stitched two images together in Photoshop to create this panoramic shot
Sony Alpha 100, 18-75mm, 1/100sec at f/10, ISO 100

Newborough, Anglesey

3 This is one of Laura's earliest attempts at capturing a successful landscape shot
Sony Alpha 100, 18-75mm, 1/400sec at f/10, ISO 100

Newlands Horseshoe, Cumbria

4 The simple natural light reveals the inherent beauty of this area
Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 150mm macro, 1/200sec at f/3.5, ISO 100







Mark Massey Essex

Mark has always had an interest in photography, as he works with pictures in his job as a magazine designer. However, he only started taking image-making seriously in 2007 when he decided to start a photoblog. His first camera was a Canon EOS 500N SLR, but he has since upgraded to a Canon EOS 40D. In the future, Mark would like to continue learning so he can improve his skills.

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Tropical Wings

1 The unusual tilt of the camera lens in this image creates a dynamic and off-kilter composition. Canon EOS 40D, 10-20mm, 1/160sec at f/10, ISO 400

Cows

2 Here Mark has found himself surrounded by a herd of particularly inquisitive cows. Canon EOS 400D, 24mm, 1/320sec at f/10, ISO 400

Gull

3 Mark has added this vignetting effect during post-processing in Photoshop. Canon EOS 400D, 50mm, 1/1250sec at f/9, ISO 400

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APpraisal



Expert advice, help and tips from AP Editor Damien Demolder

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Alastair Ross

Pentax MZ-30, 28-80mm, Kodak Tri-X

SOMETHING catches your eye, such as a pattern, a shape or a colour. You work on it, circle it and then capture it. Then you look at it, recognise why you did it, but realise that actually it wasn't all that interesting in the first place. I suffer from this, too, only this is a more interesting view than some of my own, and while the trees are cleverly lined up they just don't get me excited. I've coloured the midtones and shadows with blue and cyan to add a chill to the snowy scene, but I still don't think it's the cracker Alastair was hoping for. It's one of those things, Alastair, that I think we all have to deal with. Clever, neat, well observed, technically perfect – but ultimately missing the thrill factor.

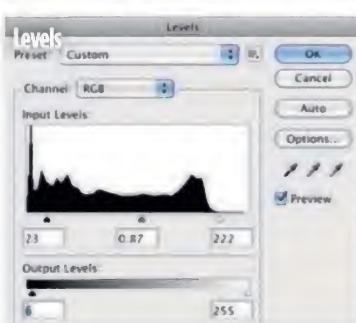


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I've used the Levels tool to deepen the blacks and the midtones to draw more contrast around the most important aspects of the scene. With a greater difference in tone between the eyelashes and the skin behind them, they stand out more, as do the shadows of the bars because they have become darker while their background has become lighter. I haven't changed the composition, but with that added contrast I think people will get the story and what Richard wants to say a bit more quickly.

Son sleeping

Richard Cooper

Canon EOS 7D, 50mm, 1/200sec at f/8, ISO 100

RICHARD has sent me this wonderful picture of his son asleep sitting up in his cot – or his prison, as Richard puts it. He wanted to emphasise this cell theme by concentrating on the shadows of the bars across the picture.

To understand the story, there are a couple of key points we need to grasp – one is the bars and the other is the fact that the boy is sleeping. And to ensure we all take these points in immediately, Richard needs to make sure they stand out and grab our attention. With the moderate contrast that is used in the picture, though, nothing really stands out and you don't get the story unless you take the time to study it in-depth. That the boy is facing away makes life a bit difficult to start with, but we have the profile angle of the closed eye and the slightly bowed head to give us enough of a clue – we just need to make sure the closed eye gets seen.

Mer de Glace Glacier, France Rik Williams

THIS is an impressive vista! I love the swirl of the curving paths of ice that sweep from the bottom left and top right, and which pass each other by in the upper third of the frame. It's a grand view, and we can appreciate that it's grand because we have the scale of the people in the frame to help us get a sense of how big everything is.

I think this is an excellent shot, but I want to show you a couple things that I think will help Rik to emphasise the most exciting elements of the picture.

Colour is an important part of this shot, but I'm not sure the cyan/green of the original is accurate or convincing. I tried

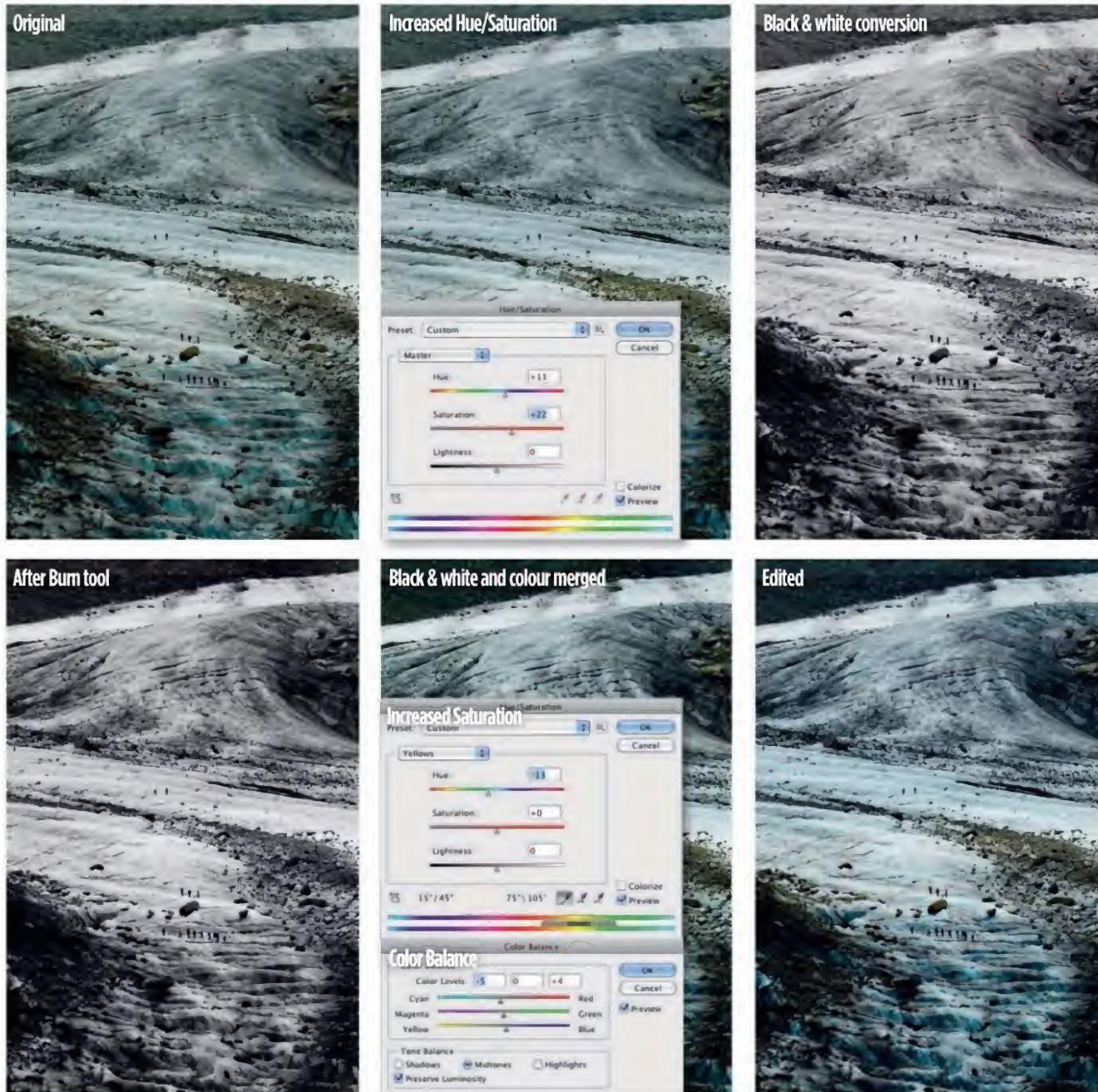
upping the colour saturation and shifting the hue, and while this helped I'm not certain it quite does the trick.

My next experiments centred around getting the greyscale contrast correct. When the picture is turned to black & white via a red/blue channel mix conversion, we get to see the tonal structure of the shot and how those sweeping pathways have been formed. I increased the contrast a bit in Curves, and then used the Burn tool (shadows, 8%) to darken the gravel at the top of the frame as well as the shadow of the bowl at top right. I used the Dodge tool to pick out some of the highlights, copied the whole image, dropped

it back on top of the colour version and set the layer blending to 'Luminance'. Now I have the contrast of the black & white image injected into the colour original.

To fix the colour this time I've increased the saturation, shifted the hue of yellow to reduce the amount of green it was showing, and injected cyan and blue to the shadow and midtone areas. The final is compositionally unchanged from the original, but with the contrast and new colour, the drama of the shapes and flow of the landscape stand out better, and the people on the lower third are more visible. It is still a great shot, and Rik wins my picture of the week prize.

PICTURE
OF THE
WEEK



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AP Testbench

Over the next few pages we present this week's equipment tests, reader questions and technique pointers



Micromuff DSLR microphone wind baffle £12.95

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ANYONE who has recorded video footage outside in a breeze will know how the recorded sound can be affected by wind blowing into the camera's microphone. Professional videographers and filmmakers use external microphones with windshields that protect them from problematic gusts of wind.

The small Micromuff aims to replicate this effect. A small Velcro ring is stuck around a camera's microphone and the Micromuff is then attached. Its long 'acoustic' hairs prevent the wind from blowing into the microphone hole, while allowing other sound through. The Velcro ring can be left on the camera for attaching and detaching the Micromuff when required.

I found the Micromuff worked well, softening loud gusts and preventing them from sounding like thunder on replayed video footage. For the highest possible audio quality, it is best to use a good external microphone and wind shield, but for holiday and social footage the Micromuff can make a big difference. This is a must if you are filming in a windy location. **Richard Sibley**



Amateur Photographer
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Manfrotto 057 carbon-fibre 3-section tripod legs £549.95

www.manfrotto.co.uk

MANFROTTO'S 057 series is the company's most stable and solid tripod range, designed for the professional photographer. There are three-section and four-section versions, both of which come in regular or 'geared' central column types. On test here is the three-section regular type, which offers a maximum capacity of 18kg. This makes the tripod suitable for almost any professional-level camera and lens combination, and of course smaller models too. Being made of carbon fibre with aluminium castings, the tripod is both lightweight (relative to its size) at 2.8kg, but expensive.

Stability is key here, with the chunky three-section legs having tube diameters of 39.2mm, 34.2mm and 29.2mm, which provides a solid base. Each leg can be angled to 23°, 50° and 75°, the latter of which offers a 220mm minimum height. I like the lock releases on the inside of the legs. With the aluminium central column fully extended, the maximum reach is 1,800mm, while reversing it for low-level shooting is a simple process of removing the bottom cap and spirit level. Tapping the legs when the tripod is fully extended shows minor wobble looking through the camera's viewfinder, but this is improved a little by lowering the centre column and bottom leg sections.

Manfrotto uses lever locks on its legs, which I find quicker to operate than the twist type. This tripod should satisfy the discerning photographer, although as an overall package I prefer the Vanguard Auctus 323CT, which is slightly cheaper (if a little heavier). **Tim Coleman**

FORTHCOMING TESTS In the next few weeks AP hopes to run the following equipment through the most rigorous testing procedures in the industry...

Sony NEX-7

We test the advanced compact system camera from Sony that could finally be the model photographers have been waiting for.

AP 19 November

Fujifilm FinePix X10

Fuji's advanced compact camera follows the styling of the X100. We put it to the test.

AP 3 December

Sony NEX-5N

The update to the original NEX-5 sees a new 16-million-pixel sensor, 10fps shooting and 1080p HD video.

AP 3 December

Samsung NX200

We look at the 20-million-pixel, APS-C-sensor compact system camera set to challenge the advanced market.

AP 10 December

Canon PowerShot S100

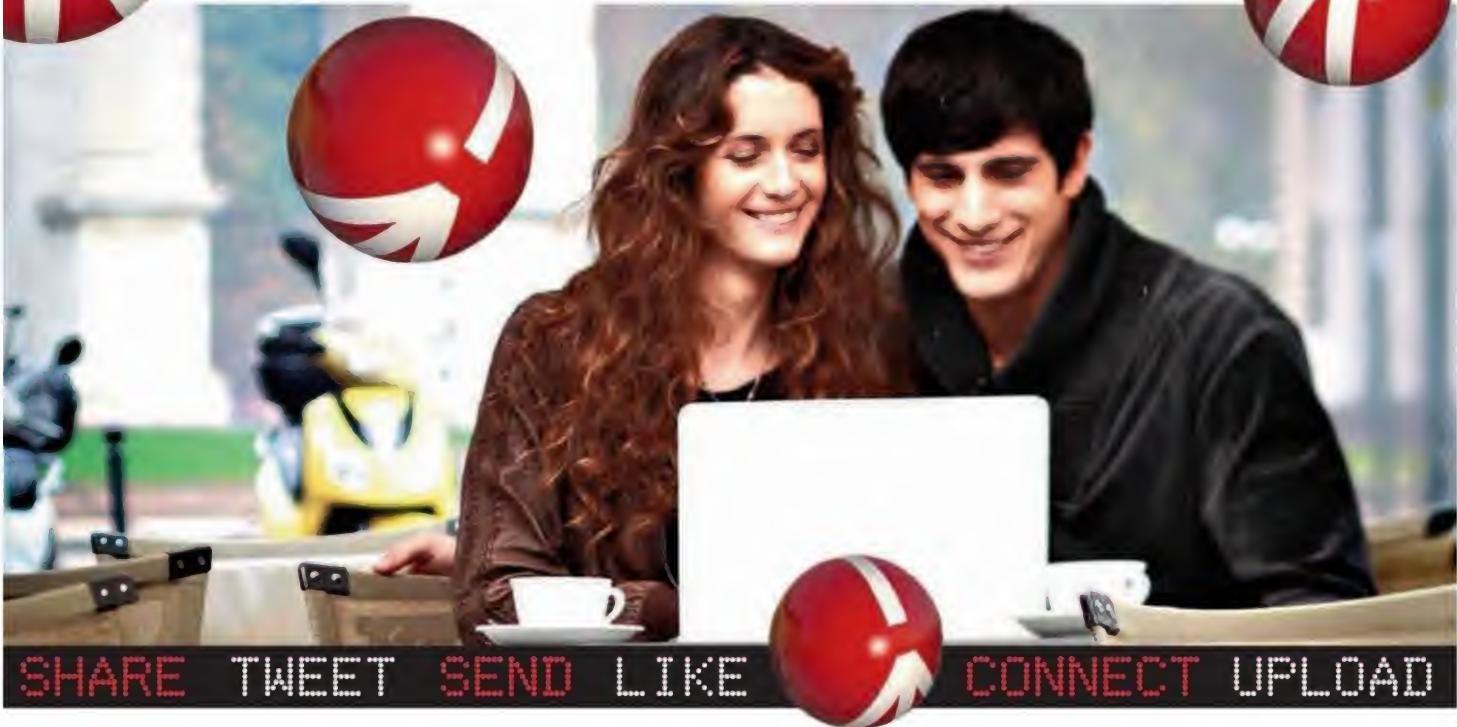
This advanced compact camera features the brand-new Digic 5 processor, 12.1-million-pixel HS sensor and 24mm f/2 lens.

AP 10 December



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Nikon 1 V1

Every now and then a camera comes along that challenges our ability to accept a new concept. The **Nikon 1-series V1** is just such a model, says **Damien Demolder**

Damien Demolder
Editor

NOT ALL Nikon users will admit to wanting a compact system camera, but most acknowledge that a small model with plenty of control, good optics and excellent image quality would be tempting. They have had to endure a decade of being slightly jealous of Canon's PowerShot G series, while Nikon's Coolpix models have failed, until recently, to match up. It depends how you view these things, of course, but you might see the new Nikon 1-series models, the J1 and V1, as cameras to compete with those super compacts rather than the lower end of the F-mount DSLR range. On the other hand, you might just feel a

bit let down that while Samsung and Sony manage small bodies with DSLR controls and densely packed APS-C sensors, your favourite brand seems to have stepped backwards instead of forwards. However good the lenses are and however nicely the 1 cameras are made, they will only be as good as that compact-sized, 10-million-pixel sensor – and 10-million-pixel sensors seem more than a little out of date.

It is quite difficult to get it straight in my head quite who the V1 is aimed at. Nikon claims it targets young couples and early adopters, which rather excludes the traditional AP reader. However, as always, we can ignore what the marketing men say and decide for ourselves whether these tiny cameras have anything to offer those who take their photography a bit more seriously. Nikon says the camera is about the features, not the sensor, but we'll have to see how those features fit with our requirements.

AT A GLANCE

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FEATURES

The Nikon 1 V1 is a digital interchangeable-lens camera that houses a 10.1-million-pixel, 13.2x8.8mm CMOS sensor capable of producing images up to a maximum size of 3872x2592 pixels in raw and JPEG formats. The camera uses the new Nikon 1 mount, which has a diameter of 40cm. The small diameter of the throat and small sensor size make the camera an ideal target for lens adapters, although currently the only one available is designed to allow the camera to accept Nikon's DSLR F-mount lenses. At the moment, though, the camera needs a recognisable lens fitted before it will operate, so a simple ring adapter won't work.

With this size sensor, marked focal lengths need to be multiplied by a factor of 2.7x to discover the equivalent perspective from a full-frame, or 35mm, system camera.

The camera comes equipped with both electronic and mechanical shutters, and users have the opportunity to choose between them. While both shutter modes offer a maximum opening time of 30secs, the shortest mechanical duration is only a respectable 1/4000sec compared to the 1/16,000sec that the electronic shutter can achieve. In mechanical mode, flash syncs at 1/250sec, or longer, but the electronic shutter requires at least 1/60sec.

It is the electronic shutter that allows the V1 to perform some of its cleverest tricks, which rely on an ability to drive at 10, 30 and 60 frames per second. In normal drive mode, accessed

 via use of the regular exposure modes, the maximum rate at which pictures can be captured is a more sedate 5fps. It is the high-speed shooting that Nikon is most proud of, though, and which has been used to create motion snapshot and smart photo selector modes and 60fps continuous shooting. In each of these modes the camera is able to work with full-resolution images because Nikon has used its Expeed 3 processor, which, the company tells us, is more powerful than that used in even its professional DSLRs. Motion snapshot takes a picture as normal, but precedes it with a couple of seconds of movie. The result is a more dramatic entrance to a still, set to jingly music, and is quite effective – though also quite difficult to print. The smart photo selector mode shoots 20 images in very quick and silent succession, and then analyses them to choose the best five for displaying on the rear screen. The idea is to avoid closed eyes spoiling your pictures.

The other aspect of the camera of which Nikon is especially proud is the autofocus system. Combining the usual contrast-detection system of compact cameras with a DSLR-type, phase-detection array embedded in the imaging sensor, the V1, Nikon claims, has the fastest AF in the world. The user has no control over which type of AF system is used, but the camera alternates according to the situation.

Users have the usual selection of exposure modes, as well as a collection of scene settings to work with. Nikon also provides picture styles that allow enhanced colour, and no colour, as well as access to contrast and saturation sliders to customise the default positions. White balance comes in the usual varieties, as does exposure metering alongside a decent enough ISO range of 100-3200.

The V1, being the more advanced model in the range, is equipped with an electronic viewfinder built in to the main structure of the body. This EVF uses a 0.47in chip containing 1.44 million dots and can provide a 100% view of the image to be captured.

7/10 

BUILD AND HANDLING

Despite its 'advanced' nature, the V1 has few external button controls and dials. DSLR users might initially be a bit distressed and feel access to the principal features and functions is somewhat limited. Altering exposure modes, for example, requires a visit to the main menu screen to find the available options. In reality, though, I suspect that most photographers have a preferred exposure mode that they tend to set and stick to. I set aperture priority and, had I not been testing the camera rather than just using it, I would not have felt the need to seek out the exposure options more than once.

The menu has a memory, so on the pressing of the menu button it returns to the most-recently accessed option, which is quite likely to be close to that which is



Colours are well controlled in the default setting, with moderate saturation

The in-camera black & white mode seems to make most use of the green channel

intended to be changed. I found the modes I most often went in search of were the ISO and white balance settings, which are next to each other and which both take just a few moments to alter. It's true that a direct access button on the rear of the body would make this process a lot quicker, but I suppose this is part of the price we must pay for such a miniaturised body. There are compact cameras that do manage to offer body controls for these settings, but

again we have to take account of the target market Nikon is aiming for – who tend to develop anxiety when shown too much that's technical-looking.

There is a function button at the top of the camera's rear, of the type that is so often customisable to a personal preference, but in this case it is fixed to what Nikon believes is best. In normal stills mode, the function button allows us to choose between mechanical and electronic shutters – an option I suspect few will actually find useful. To offer this as a direct access to ISO, for example, might have been my preference.

If you have ever used a Nikon menu before, that of the V1 will cause no distress, as it is clearly and, for the most part, logically laid out and ordered. There are three screens that deal with shooting, reviewing and camera set-up, and none is very long.

In use, with any of the three lenses currently available, the camera feels well balanced and is very comfortable to hold. While we can appreciate the benefits of its tiny dimensions, there is none of the inconvenience that so often comes with products that have been made smaller than usual. At no point in the test did I feel that Nikon's designers had gone too far. There is a prominent ridge on the front of the body that acts as finger grip and a padded raised platform on the rear for the thumb. Unfortunately, the thumb pad is a little too close to the main mode dial, and I found that without special care when rotating the camera from landscape to portrait orientation, I also often switched it from stills to movie mode as my thumb joint caught hold of the edge of the dial. It becomes frustrating when you go to shoot a still at the perfect moment only to find you are focusing the lens for a movie to be made. Perhaps a small dial lock would solve this.

The rear rocker dial provides quick access to a neat exposure compensation scale,



AF modes and the self-timer. The upper button can be programmed either to lock exposure or focus when pressed, and by default does both. You might expect the external ring of the dial to alter apertures or shutter speeds in priority mode, but in fact it does nothing, giving up this more natural function to an up/down lever marked as the magnifying zoom for playback. It is no inconvenience once you are used to it, but it remained surprising for the duration of the test.

I spent some time determining the best way to ensure the camera was ready to shoot at a moment's notice after a period of inactivity, such as occurs when walking along the street looking for a subject to appear. The camera goes to sleep after a defined time that can be set in the menu, but switching that off so the camera remains active and ready the whole time causes the rear screen to play and the battery to heat as well as drain. The issue came about because, while the camera is quick to start from an off position, it takes a few seconds to come back to life from a deep sleep – something that cost me missed shots. In the end, I made the most of the lens button that extends the zoom and simultaneously activates the body. Switching the camera off completely and defibrillating it back into the world by turning the lens with the button depressed actually proved to be the quickest method – and one that is less complicated than it sounds. The camera appears to have two levels of sleep, the second much deeper than the initial.

My overall impression of the body is of one that is very well made and which is comfortable to hold as well as use. It seems to me that it has been made to be small rather than just being made small – a somewhat fine difference of design.

7/10



METERING

The camera offers the usual three metering options one would expect to find on a full-sized SLR, with a 2mm spot being the finest method of measurement. In use I found the system to be really pretty predictable, which is always a good thing, and it seems to act in a consistent and reliable manner. As with so many cameras, the V1's desire to produce a nice print-ready image shifts it

The matrix metering system needed a +0.6EV boost for this contrasty scene

towards creating files that seem a little light for my liking, and which increase the risks of the burnt-out highlights that are inherent in small sensors. To this end, I quickly made use of the exposure compensation button and dialled between -0.3 and -0.7EV for all but the most obviously backlit subjects. Beyond that, though, the system is not easily fooled and seems to deal very well with all that is thrown at it.

8/10

AUTOFOCUS

Cameras that lack a mirror tend, on the whole, to rely on a system of contrast monitoring via the imaging sensor to drive automatic focusing. While this is the way focusing is managed in practically all compact cameras, as well as compact system cameras, it is a method that lags somewhat behind the phase-detection systems used in DSLRs. Nikon, however, has managed to incorporate a phase-detection system into the sensor of its V1 and J1 models.

Using dedicated pixels in lines across the sensor, the camera is able to switch between contrast- and phase-detection modes according to the lighting conditions. As the sensor is pretty small, the distance between the phase-detection pixels can't be that great, and thus the 'base' of the system is probably somewhat shorter than in a normal SLR. Having 'eyes' closer together makes it more difficult to judge distances, but Nikon is still happy to claim that this is the fastest AF system in the world.

In good conditions, and actually in average conditions, too, I did find that the camera focuses very quickly, but in low light it struggles a bit. The degree of struggle is not unexpected, however, and I think it is fair to say that the V1 AF system works in light levels many



FEATURES IN USE

HIGH-SPEED CAPTURE ETC

THE Nikon 1 V1 uses its high-speed capture ability in a number of ways. The most obvious is a 60fps mode that captures each frame in full 10-million-pixel resolution. If this were a normal drive mode, rather than a specific program, it would be more useful. 'Hi' mode disallows access to many creative controls and so is a little limiting. It is also not an easy mode to work in, as Nikon has disabled certain menu options when Hi is selected. If you switch the Hi mode on but realise you need an alternative ISO setting, you have to go back to one of the normal shooting modes to make the adjustment. Hi mode is as happy to work with ISO 100 as it is with ISO 3200, but

it won't let you change between them. Slightly more surprising is that the same is true of the AF modes – to switch from single shot to continuous AF requires moving out of the Hi mode first.

The motion snapshot mode, that records a short burst of slow-mo video before the still, is a great feature to view on the camera. Quite what one does with the clip after I'm not sure. Adobe just breaks the snapshot into a still and a movie, and the only place to play the clips is in the Nikon software. Here the clips can be exported as Mov files, but I'm still not sure what their use is.

The slow-motion movies also look great on the rear screen. They are fun and inspirational to

create, but once again out of the camera their appeal diminishes slightly. Shot at 400fps you really do get an effective slow-mo clip, but at a resolution of 640x240 pixels the clips look noisy and low resolution on screen – and they can't easily be integrated into a normal movie sequence. Slow-motion movies shot at 1200fps are even lower resolution – 320x120 pixels.

The V1 is geared around the existence of these high-speed features and, while they are fun to use, I suspect that actually they won't be exercised very often. When they are dormant the V1 becomes like any other camera, and will be judged on its performance, not its features.

 others would not. Subject detection in close-focusing situations can be tricky, and macro focusing is not always straightforward. I found it frustrating at times to see the subject come in and out of focus without the camera being able to lock on, but in reality this is a very small issue. Where the AF system really shines is in its continuous mode, in which it discovers and tracks subjects or shifting distances under the AF point extremely quickly.

8/10

NOISE, SENSITIVITY AND RESOLUTION

That we are working here with fewer pixels than perhaps we might be used to definitely has an impact on the total image quality this camera system is able to produce. I think, though, that when considering the V1 we have to accept from the beginning that we have 10.1 million pixels, and that we have chosen that way of working, and that surely has to alter the way image quality is examined. My job initially is to compare with what already exists in the market, and yours will be to decide whether that suits what you do and whether the price is worth paying for the size and weight of the system.

I have spent quite a lot of time shooting in low light as this is both where my own interest in using the system lies as well as where the system will be tested against its weakest points. In the event, though, the results have turned out well and what we might have remembered from previous 10-million-pixel sensors, even ones larger than this, has moved on in the intervening years. Nikon, already well respected for an ability to reduce noise in high ISO settings, has clearly applied a good deal of expertise to the way it treats the pictures recorded by this camera. While noise is, of course, present and obvious at the higher settings, it never becomes an overriding reason not to adjust the sensitivity beyond ISO 800. I have been quite impressed and my expectations have been at least matched in most cases. Noise reduction is effective.

When studying the images taken by this camera closely, it becomes clear that some fine detail is missing. I am used to cameras that turn grass into carpet when resolution runs out, but that doesn't happen here. There are no active signs of a lack of detail – no blurring or fuzziness – but when you go to look for that detail you'll find that actually it's not there. This was something I noticed in real-world imagery before I examined the results of our lab resolution tests. These tell the same story, but in a more graphic and alarming way – that resolution is actually quite limited. Scoring just about 20 on our resolution chart, the camera is outperformed by some of the top-end compacts, such as the PowerShot G12 and Samsung EX1. There is no obvious appearance of low resolution in normal pictures, but it does rather limit the amount images can be enlarged.



Facts & figures



RRP	Around £829 with 10-30mm lens
Street price	Around £829 with 10-30mm lens
Sensor	10.1-million-pixel, 13.2x8.8mm CMOS
Output size	3872x25925 pixels
Focal length mag	2.7x
Lens mount	Nikon 1 mount
File format	JPEG, NEF (raw) 12-bit, MPEG-4
Compression	3-stage JPEG
Colour space	Adobe RGB, sRGB
Shutter type	Electronic and mechanical options
Shutter speeds	30-1/4000sec (1/1600sec in electronic shutter setting)
Max flash sync	1/250sec (1/60sec in electronic shutter mode)
ISO	ISO 100-3200, expandable to 6400
Exposure modes	Program, aperture priority, shutter priority, manual, auto scene mode selector
Metering system	TTL multi-segment, spot, centre
Exposure comp	±3EV in 1/3 steps
White balance	Auto, 6 presets, custom
White balance bracket	No
Drive mode	Up to 5fps in mechanical mode, 10, 30 or 60fps in Hi
LCD	3in, 921k-dot LCD
Viewfinder type	Electronic viewfinder with 1440k dots
Field of view	100% on LCD and EVF
Dioptr adjustment	-3 to +1
Focusing modes	AF/MF with single shot and continuous AF modes
AF points	135-area, face detection, AF tracking, select, spot
DoF preview	No
Built-in flash	No, hot shoe fitting
Video	Full HD (1080p), 30fps, MPEG-4
External mic	Yes, 3.5mm socket
Memory card	SD/SDHC/SDXC
Power	Rechargeable Li-Ion EN-EL15
Connectivity	Mini HDMI, PC/AV
Weight	383g with battery and card (294g body only)
Dimensions	113x76x43.5mm

Nikon UK Ltd, 380 Richmond Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT2 5PR. Tel: 0330 123 0932
www.nikon.co.uk

24/30

RESOLUTION & NOISE

These images show 72ppi (100% on a computer screen) sections of images of a resolution chart, captured using the 10-30mm lens at its sharpest f/8 setting. We show the section of the resolution chart where the camera starts to fail to reproduce the lines separately. The higher the number visible in these images, the better the camera's detail resolution is at the specified sensitivity setting.



Long-exposure noise



Long-exposure noise is well dealt with by the V1, as shown here in this 25sec exposure using ISO 200



FOCAL POINTS

Hotshoe
The camera doesn't have a built-in flash, but via this powered accessory port it accepts the SB-N5 external gun. I suspect the port will be used for other accessories in the future, too

Rear screen
This is a good-sized screen that is easy to view even in bright conditions. Images appear sharp enough that focus can be checked with some degree of certainty



Camera shown actual size

Main menu

The main menu is laid out in almost exactly the way a regular Nikon user would expect. The options are clearly marked and a press to the right takes you to the sub-menus and settings for each feature.

Vibration reduction

The camera offers three vibration reduction modes – normal, active and off. While the normal setting works very well, I found the active mode a little over-enthusiastic and the cause of shake in some cases.

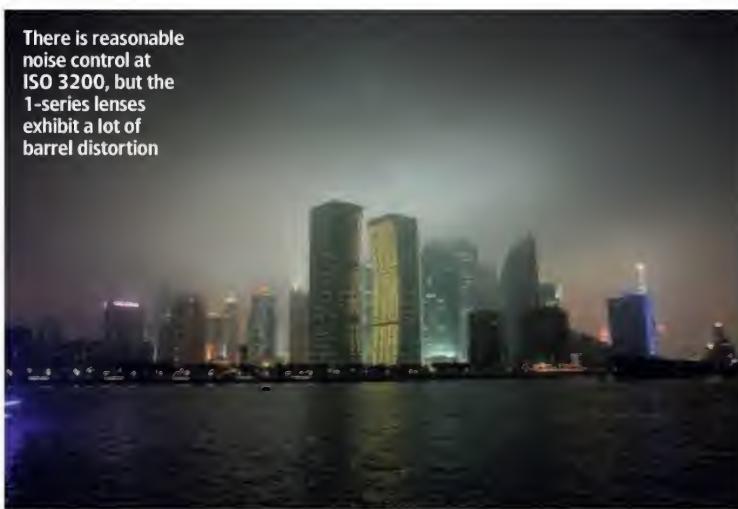
Movie modes

The movie function of the V1 is quite sophisticated, with a range of metering options, as well as frame sizes and frame rates. The maximum clip duration in best quality is 20 minutes.

Information display

If Nikon is hoping not to scare away the newcomer, let's hope they don't press the display button too many times. The full display has all the information for which a DSLR user might hope.





DYNAMIC RANGE

Nikon gives us the benefit in the V1 of its D-Lighting dynamic range optimiser with settings simply for off or active. With active selected, contrast controls in the picture modes are switched off, which makes sense should users try to increase contrast and optimise dynamic range at the same time. The metering system favours a bright image, which in turn damages the chances of recording detail in bright skies and side/backlit areas of the scene.

While we might not expect too much from small pixels, Nikon has got plenty from these ones, and I didn't often lose detail in shadows or highlights. As ISO sensitivities increase it seems shadows are automatically lightened to avoid an almost inevitable emphasis on the contrast between light and dark. I found that while this is well intentioned, I often added contrast back in at the image-processing stage on the computer.



WHITE BALANCE AND COLOUR

I've been pleased that in a camera designed to impress the masses, Nikon has managed to avoid making colours oversaturated and bold for that instant impact so many manufacturers believe people want. When the white balance is accurate, you'll find the relationships between the colours in pictures are accurate and believable, too. There are no powerful reds and overbearing greens, although should that be desired there are customisable picture modes that will provide them. I spent most of my time shooting with the white balance set to daylight, and in direct sun the setting proved itself. Options for shade and overcast proved not to suit the conditions quite so well, with a dank yellow/cyan cast rather spoiling things. This can be adjusted in-camera with an advanced colour-shift chart where users can add or subtract colours to their heart's content. This seems a somewhat complex and sophisticated piece of software for the masses, but useful to those with an eye.

nonetheless. I was very pleased with how easily and quickly a custom white balance can be made and applied. With the menu selected, a picture is taken of a white or grey object and the process is quickly completed.

8/10

LCD AND VIEWFINDER

A good deal has been made recently about the differences between electronic and optical viewfinders, and in this model Nikon gives us a good chance to investigate some more. While a 1.44-million-dot resolution isn't the highest that exists in an EVF camera, the viewfinder of the V1 proved itself rather nice to work with during this test. It is clear enough and bright, and seems to refresh at a rate that does not induce blur or an especially obvious delay between the action happening in real life and on the screen. In low light there is a bit of drag and the amplified image does appear slightly grainy, but both are preferable to not being able to see what you are taking a picture of.

That the EVF is built in rather than an accessory, as happens quite often in compact system cameras, makes a big difference. Compared to many, the viewfinder seems bold and large, and the experience is a long way from looking down a tunnel. The colours seem to match those of the rear screen well, and while both are somewhat simplified compared to what the eye sees, they are good enough to render a clear idea of what will be captured and the accuracy of the white balance setting in use. One does not quite get the same connection as is possible with a very good optical viewfinder, but those are not as common as people seem to believe and this, I think, makes a more than satisfactory method of viewing the scene.

The camera's rear screen measures a generous 3in across and has a resolution of 921,000 dots, which is just about enough for a meaningful manual-focusing experience. I found it fine to view in bright light and easy on the eye in dark conditions.

9/10

Competition



Pentax Q

TESTED AP 29 OCTOBER 2011



Panasonic Lumix DMC-GF3

TESTED AP 30 JULY 2011

WHAT competes with this camera depends to a large extent on what your main reason for considering it is. If you are looking for a very small body you might also look at the Pentax Q, but that really isn't much of an option at all. Closest in size beyond that are the micro four thirds cameras from Panasonic and Olympus, particularly the Lumix DMC-GF3 and Pen E-PL3. These offer more pixels and a form of handling that might better suit the DSLR user. They are both larger than the V1 and both use lenses that will require more space in the camera bag – but neither can match the shooting rates of this Nikon.

If you are not so bothered about a camera being really small, you could look at any of the other compact system cameras on the market – and there are now plenty. For a combination of small size and high resolution, the Sony NEX-7 might prove hard to beat – but at a higher price.

Verdict

IT IS easy to cite the pixel count of the V1 as a reason not to be impressed, but I have to consider that the 10.1-million population could be the benefit that Nikon claims rather than the disappointment Nikon F users suspect.

In the event I've not been especially bothered by the 'low' pixel count, and while there is a definite undercutting of absolute detail resolution, those printing not larger than A4 will be happy. If that's you, the benefits of the small system can be enjoyed – and it is an enjoyable camera. However, there's a voice in my head whispering that for just a bit more weight and bulk I could be using a camera that allows larger prints, records more fine detail and which will let me crop dramatically if I want to. When I listen to that voice it is much more difficult to remember what the benefits of the V1 are.

It is a fun camera to use, it is truly small and it does have entertaining features, but if image quality is your ultimate aim there are other cameras that will serve your purposes better. Nikon says the camera is about the features, not the sensor, but the high-speed features don't constitute an enduring reason for me to buy. That just leaves the sensor.

**Amateur
Photographer**
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system camera
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79%

	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
FEATURES	7/10						
BUILD/HANDLING	7/10						
NOISE/RESOLUTION	24/30						
DYNAMIC RANGE	8/10						
AWB/COLOUR	8/10						
METERING	8/10						
AUTOFOCUS	8/10						
LCD/VIEWFINDER	9/10						

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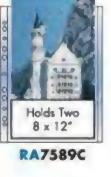
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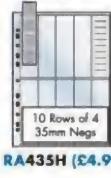
Holds Two
10x8"



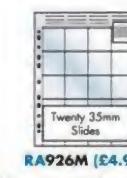
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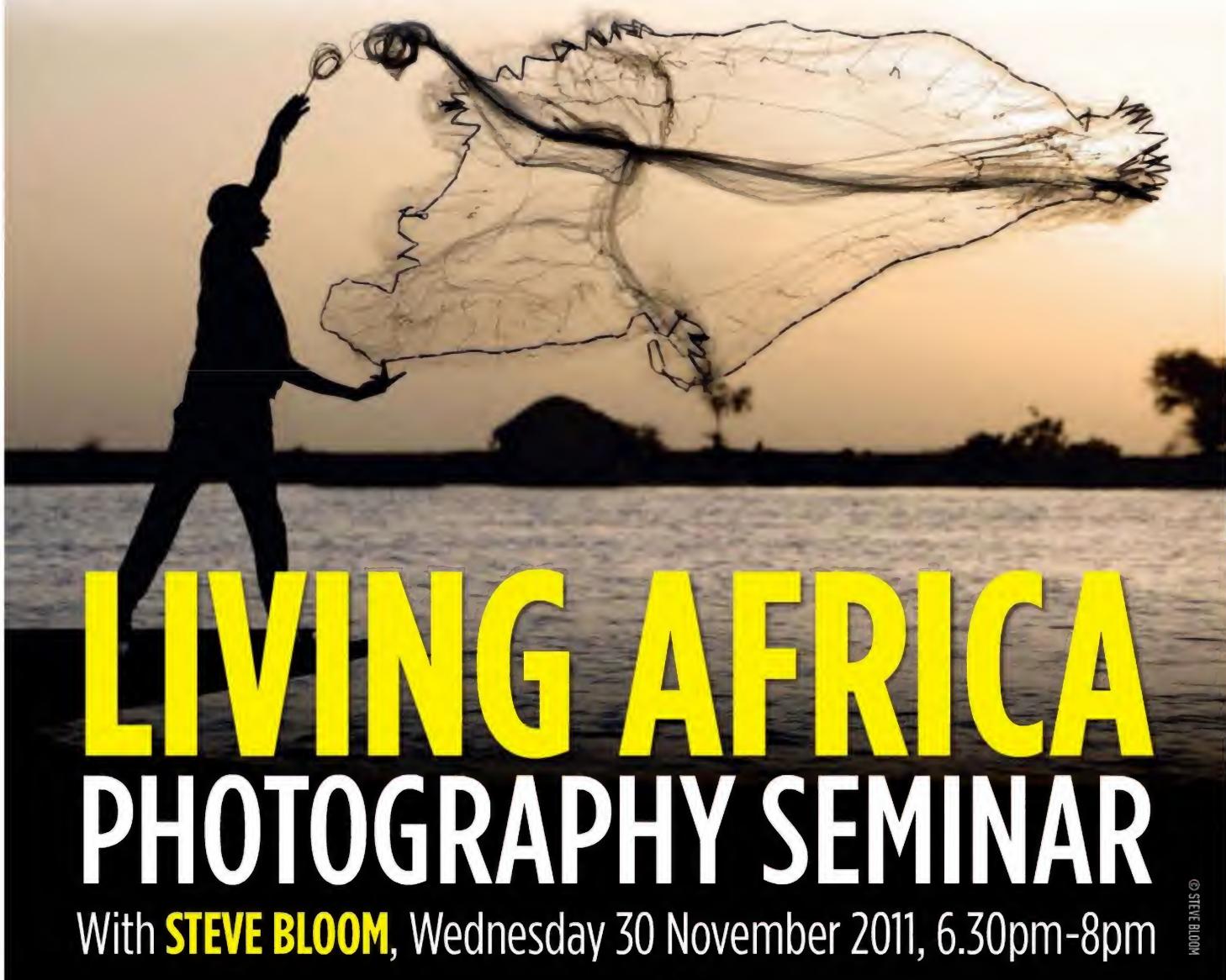


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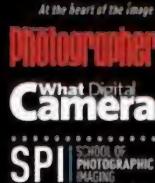
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Epson Stylus Photo 1400 vs Canon Pixma iX6550

More and more enthusiasts want to print their images at A3 size, and manufacturers now have a range of printers to suit all needs. **Vincent Oliver** reviews two entry-level models

THE MAINSTREAM photo-printer market used to be dominated by A4 printers. These were relatively affordable and, more importantly, enthusiast digital cameras at the time didn't have good-enough resolution to allow images to be happily enlarged beyond that size. So A3 printing was very much the domain of the professional.

However, as resolution improved and enthusiast DSLRs increasingly featured

'professional' attributes, photographers began looking for printers that could do justice to their photographs. Manufacturers responded to the rising demand and now companies such as Epson and Canon have a range of A3 printers to suit everyone's requirements, both in terms of quality and price. The two entry-level printers tested here are the Epson Stylus Photo 1400 and Canon Pixma iX6550.

CANON PIXMA iX6550

The Canon Pixma iX6550 is a dye-ink printer with five separate ink tanks in black, magenta, cyan, pigment black and yellow. The pigment black is used for text printing only, so in effect this is a four-colour-ink photo printer.

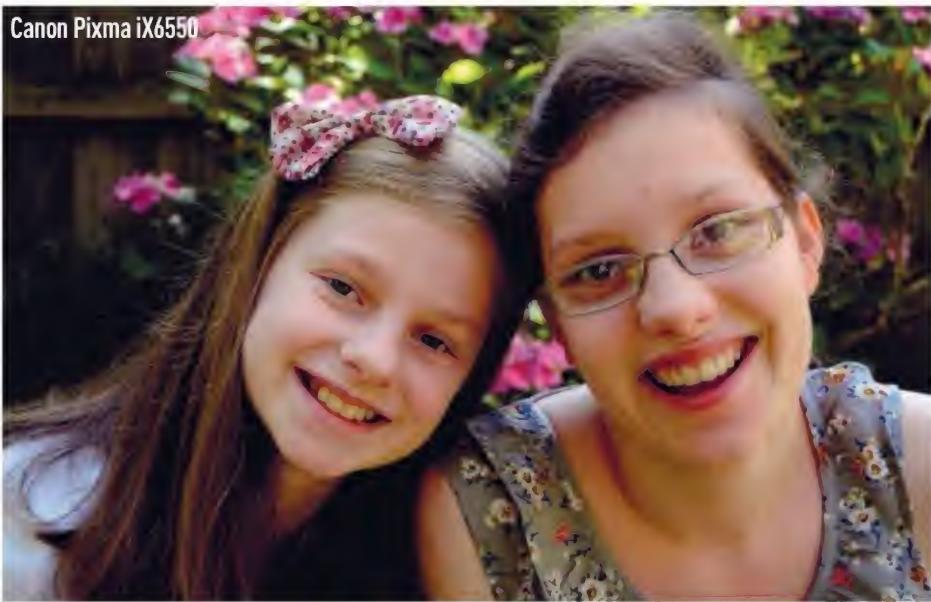
An orange print head cradle needs to be fitted into the printer before operation. Although this is a simple task, I wonder why it couldn't be done at the manufacturing stage. It is, however, reassuring to know that the print heads can be easily changed by the user should they become blocked. The ink tanks look very small for an A3 printer, but are easy to fit in the colour-coded slots and shouldn't cause any problems. However, be aware that ink tanks can be fitted in the wrong compartments.

Setting up and driver installation is an easy process: you can choose either the Easy Install or Custom Install option. The easy option takes about 14mins to complete and will include the on-screen manual, Easy Photo Print application, as well as the printer drivers. As part of the installation process the printer

The grey and black exterior of the Stylus Photo 1400 dates the Epson, while the iX6550 features Canon's latest Pixma design

60

Canon Pixma iX6550



Epson Stylus Photo 1400



will perform an automatic head-alignment routine, which involves loading a plain A4 sheet and letting the printer take care of the rest. The head alignment ensures that upright lines are not broken when the machine prints in the bi-directional mode.

The shiny black printer has a very small footprint, certainly not a lot bigger than most A4 models. Opening the front flap reveals a three-stage media catcher, which is sufficiently sturdy for the task and has a smooth action when extending. The rear media input tray also has a triple extension that doubles as a top cover. There are no guides on the actual holder, but there is a self-centring media guide that ensures the media stays in the correct position as it is being drawn into the printer.

The two buttons located at the front of the printer are a bright-blue power

While the Epson printer produces slightly warmer skintones, the Canon print is around 1/2 stop darker, with more magenta in its skintones

on/off and eject/cancel printing. The power socket and USB 2.0 port are located at the printer's rear.

The Pixma iX6550's high-gloss, piano-black finish is very impressive, although it might lose its appeal once dust and fingerprints start to appear. The printer is minimalist in both looks and features, which may appeal to the non-technical-minded user.

THE EPSON STYLUS PHOTO 1400

The Epson Stylus Photo 1400 has been around since 2007, which makes it something of a veteran in the world of digital technology. However, don't be too quick to dismiss it as yesterday's model – it still delivers a powerful punch when it comes to photo quality.

The printer uses Epson's Claria dye-inks.

Canon Pixma iX6550



Epson Stylus Photo 1400



Canon's cartridges look small for an A3 printer, but are nicely colour coded for installation, while Epson's inks are also colour coded for ease

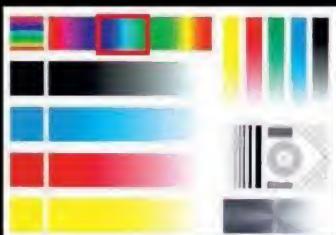
The six individual cartridges include yellow, photo black, light cyan, light magenta, cyan and magenta colours. Dye-inks may not have the longevity of pigment inks but, using Epson Premium Glossy Photo Paper, they produce superb vibrant colours. Dye-inks dry almost instantly and should retain their colours for up to 25 years, which is far better than the lifespan for traditionally printed colour photographs.

The printer is well built with a stylish black and silver finish, and is sturdy enough to easily withstand moderate to heavy use. The paper-out tray is a two-stage telescopic tray which, when folded up, doubles as the front cover. At the back of the printer is a three-stage rear media feeder that also doubles as a rear cover. The rear feeder incorporates two rubber pads to prevent large sheets of media slipping. A smooth media guide ensures that paper doesn't slip sideways as it is being drawn into the printer.

Lifting the smoked-grey top-lid gives access to the print head cradle. This is where the six ink cartridges are loaded. Lifting the lid also releases a front panel used for CD/DVD label printing (inkjet-printable CDs/DVDs must be used). A CD/DVD printing tray is included with the printer.

Other features include a PictBridge port, located on the front panel, to allow PictBridge-compatible cameras to print directly without the need for a computer. It takes a brave person, or a superb photographer, to print a sheet of A3+ media

COLOUR CHART



Canon Pixma iX6550



Epson Stylus Photo 1400



On the Epson Stylus Photo 1400, the individual cyan swatch lacks depth, but the colour spectrum shows a smooth transition between the colours. On the Canon Pixma iX6550, the transitions are far less subtle, and between blue and cyan it is more of a step than a blend, with the colours almost posterised

using PictBridge by just reviewing it on a camera's LCD screen first. I suspect that PictBridge will be the least used feature on any A3 printer.

The printer controls are located on the front of the unit and are simple to understand. The three controls are: cancel print/paper eject; ink warning and power on/off. It makes a nice change to be able to operate a device without having to wade through hefty manuals first. There are two connection ports at the rear for USB and

Facts & figures



CANON PIXMA IX6550

RRP	£199
Street price	Around £179
Max print size	A3+ size
Resolution	9600x2400dpi
Min droplet size	1pl
Print head	FINE print nozzle system
Ink system	ChromaLife100+ with 5-colour ink (pigment black, black, cyan, magenta, yellow)
Consumables	Ink tanks – £11.99 each (£13.99 pigment black)
Interface	USB 2.0
Dimensions	549x299x159mm (closed)
Weight	Approx 7.6kg (without inks)

Canon UK LTD, Woodhatch, Reigate, Surrey RH2 8BF. Tel: 01737 220 000. Website: www.canon.co.uk

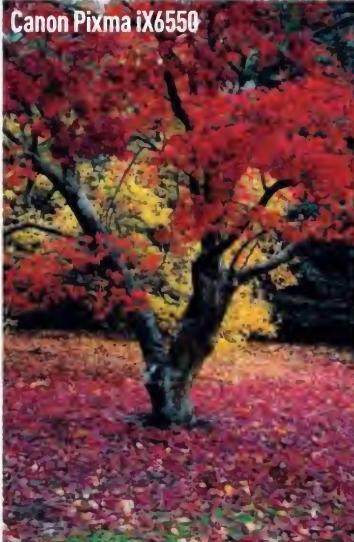


EPSON STYLUS PHOTO 1400

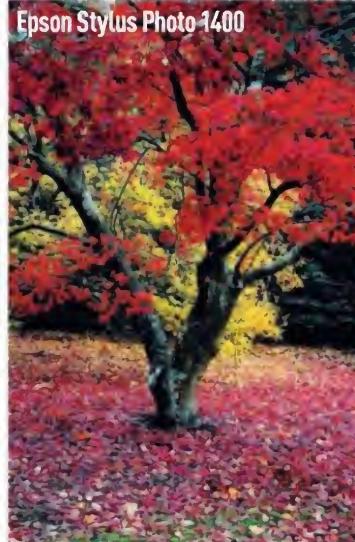
RRP	£339.99
Street price	Around £290
Max print size	A3+ size
Resolution	5760x1440dpi
Min droplet size	Variable droplet size to 1.5pl
Print head	Micro Piezo printhead with 540 nozzles (90 per ink)
Ink system	Epson Claria Photographic Ink with 6-colour dye ink (yellow, black, light cyan, light magenta, cyan, magenta)
Consumables	Ink cartridges – £13.70 each
Interface	PictBridge, USB 2.0
Dimensions	615x314x223mm (closed); 413x615x803mm (open)
Weight	Approx 11.5kg (without inks)

Epson UK Ltd, Westside, London Road, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire HP3 9TD. Tel: 0871 423 7766. Website: www.epson.co.uk

Canon Pixma iX6550



Epson Stylus Photo 1400



'It takes a brave person, or a superb photographer, to print a sheet of A3+ media using PictBridge from a camera'

PRINT QUALITY

Both the Epson Stylus Photo 1400 and Canon Pixma iX6550 are entry-level printers, so they lack the 'bells and whistles' of some of the more sophisticated and more expensive models. However, this doesn't necessarily mean they have made a compromise on print quality – in fact, far from it.

Using the *Amateur Photographer* colour chart, the Epson Stylus Photo 1400, together with Epson Premium Glossy Photo Paper, has produced a vibrant colour print. The black swatch is solid and has plenty of depth. The cyan swatch lacks colour depth and is probably the weakest colour on this printer. The red swatch has a slight leaning towards orange and the yellow has a hint of lemon. Each colour gradient displays a smooth transition from colour to white with no noticeable banding. This smooth quality will be due to the Micro Piezo print head delivering Ultra Micro Drop 1.5pl droplets of ink. The rainbow strip shows a smooth transition between each colour, although the green is the weak colour.

The Canon Pixma iX6550 print was made on Canon Photo Paper

The Epson print shows more delicate tones on the trunk and in the leaves, while the Canon print has greater overall impact

 Pro Platinum PT-101, which has a high-gloss surface. As this is a four-colour ink printer it will be interesting to see how well it handles the gradients. The solid colour swatches display impressive bold colours, with cyan and yellow outstanding but with a red that looks overinked. The colour gradients are very smooth; I wasn't expecting this from a four-ink colour printer. The iX6550 uses 1pl droplets for smooth-looking colour gradients.

Looking at the rainbow swatch, this tells a different story. The transitions between colours cannot be described as subtle. Moving between red, magenta and blue reveals a lack of smoothness. In fact, the effect is almost posterised. The blue colour is a solid mass and the transition to cyan is a step rather than a blend. This can be put down to the lack of the extra coloured inks. Printers mix colours to produce subtle shades and light colours, reducing any stepping effect.

REAL WORLD PHOTOS

For the sample images I have just used the canned profiles on each printer (Printer Manages Colours in Photoshop) and sent the

same files to both printers. No adjustments to the photos were made between printers.

The portrait on page 60 of my two girls Sophie (left) and Elizabeth (right) displays how both printers render skintone. The Epson printer produced warm skintones that closely match what I see on the monitor. The dark areas in Sophie's hair retain sufficient detail, as do the highlight areas. The Canon print is slightly darker by about $\frac{1}{3}$ stop in photographic terms, yet still manages to keep detail in the dark areas. The skintones have a leaning towards magenta, which is not a bad thing for portraits as this is more flattering than a lean towards green or cyan.

The black & white photograph (below) demonstrates how each printer renders monochrome. Just in case you are not aware, inkjet printers use a combination of colour inks to make up a grey, and if the profile is slightly out then it can introduce a colour cast. More advanced inkjet printers incorporate light black inks to ensure cast-free black & white photos. Both the Epson and Canon printers suffer from a slight colour cast. The Epson print has a slight leaning towards cyan, while the Canon iX6550 leans slightly towards

VINCENT OLIVER

Vincent runs the website www.photo-i.co.uk and specialises in digital imaging and printing. He also hosts a range of instructional DVDs on photography, printing and scanning

magenta. However, both printers produced a monochrome photo that is more than acceptable. Canon has done an impressive job with just four colours, but don't judge any print until it has fully dried. The black & white print has, direct from the printer, a very heavy magenta cast, which virtually disappears once the print is fully dry.

The autumn scene (page 61) looks impressive from each printer. The Epson print has more delicate tones, especially on the tree trunk and in the yellow leaves. However, the Canon print has greater impact, especially in the red leaves and those on the ground, which may be due to a slight darkening of the Canon print. The small patch of green grass is vibrant in the Canon print and slightly insipid in the Epson version.

Print timings are impressive: a full A4 sheet photo took 1min 43secs on the Canon printer and 59secs on the Epson.

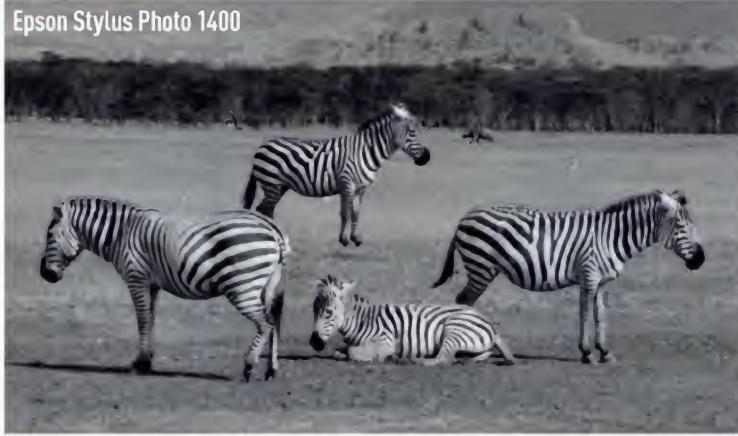
Epson's CD/DVD label printing is a useful feature to have. It will give discs a professional touch when producing a disc of images for an event or wedding, for instance. The PictBridge option may be useful for proofing using 6x4in or A4 media, but for A3+ prints it may be of limited use. 

'Skintones from the Canon printer lean towards magenta, which, for portraits, is more flattering than green or cyan'

Canon Pixma iX6550



Epson Stylus Photo 1400



Verdict

BOTH printers come into this test with a disadvantage. The Stylus Photo 1400 remains the budget model in Epson's range despite being launched in 2007. It is starting to look dated compared to the Canon model, but is still capable of producing high-quality photographs. The Pixma iX6550 is a basic four-colour printer with limited functionality. However, it also doesn't disappoint when it comes to print quality. To get the best from both printers, the companies' own branded premium-quality photo paper should be used.

In terms of functionality and features, the Stylus Photo 1400 has the edge over the Pixma iX6550. However, both printers are more than capable of producing very high-quality photographs and should satisfy most users.

CANON PIXMA IX6550

Amateur
Photographer

82%

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SPECIFICATION	20/30									
BUILD	18/20									
HANDLING	18/20									
PERFORMANCE	24/30									

EPSON STYLUS PHOTO 1400

Amateur
Photographer

82%

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SPECIFICATION	25/30									
BUILD	15/20									
HANDLING	16/20									
PERFORMANCE	26/30									

professional inkjet media

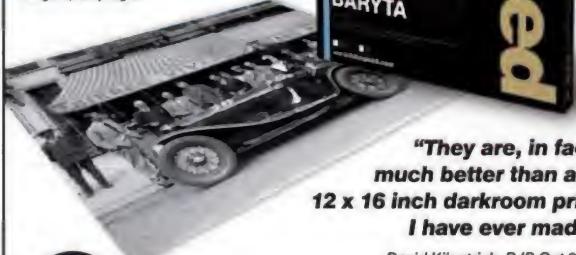
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Image: Spitzley Zegari



"They are, in fact, much better than any 12 x 16 inch darkroom print I have ever made"

David Kilpatrick, BJP Oct 2010



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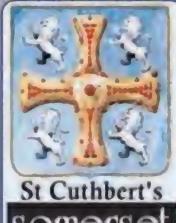
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Ask AP

Let the AP team answer your photographic queries



SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Q What is the difference between the innovative new built-in teleconverter on the new Sony Alpha 77, allowing 1.4x or 2x magnification at a lower resolution, and the old-fashioned, much-maligned digital zoom, offering typically 1.5x or 2x magnification at a lower resolution? Perhaps it has something to do with the Alpha 77's price of around £1,149.99! **Tom Campbell**

A As far as I can tell, Tom, your cynicism is justified. The Sony Alpha 77 obtains its focal-length multiplication by effectively cropping the image, which is something you can do yourself in post-processing. The advantage of the digital teleconverter is that the effect is applied to files straight off the camera.

This isn't a new feature. Nikon FX-format DSLRs switch automatically between (virtually) full-frame and a

1.5x DX crop, depending on the lens, and users can select DX or FX from the menu, thereby giving a 1.5x digital zoom.

Perhaps what separates the Alpha 77 from other cameras is its high sensor resolution. Even after a 2x crop you'll still get a very usable 6-million-pixel image, and a 12-million-pixel picture from a 1.4x crop. But I take your point that the camera is not really offering anything more than one could do by cropping in software. **Ian Farrell**

SUB-ZERO PHOTOGRAPHY

Q My girlfriend and I are going on holiday to Iceland this month to photograph the northern lights. I've been searching the internet for tips on how to prevent the cold affecting my camera and have read that I should put the camera body in a plastic bag when I go from cold temperatures to a warm room. However, should I also do this when I go from a warm room to the cold outside and what sort of bag should I use?

I use a Tamron 17-50mm f/2.8 lens on my Sony Alpha 550. Should I be using it at f/2.8 for longish exposures and, if so, how long? What about the ISO sensitivity? I'm worried that when I set this my resulting images will be grainy.

Finally, I've also read that, when focusing manually, I should put a piece of tape on the lens to prevent the focus ring shifting. Do you think this is a good idea and will it leave a mark on the lens?

Dan Taylor

A I'm jealous, Dan. It sounds like an amazing trip. You're right to think about the cold as this will have an effect on your equipment. If you can, take at least one spare battery with you as taking pictures in low temperatures will drastically reduce the number of shots you can get from one charge. Store the spares in your pocket to keep them warm. A trick you could try with your main battery is to put it into the camera only as you're about to shoot, though watch out for nasty weather or dusty conditions.

The plastic bag trick is a good way of preventing moisture building up on your Sony Alpha 550 when you bring it in from the cold. Condensation from a warm, humid environment will build up on a cold camera and could do damage, but the humidity can be excluded with an airtight plastic bag, such as those used for food storage. The same doesn't apply, incidentally, when you take a camera from a warm room to the cold environment outside.

When shooting long-exposure landscapes on a tripod, there is really no need to use the lens wide open or shoot at high ISO sensitivities. You will be better off stopping down to smaller apertures for more depth of field and shooting at the camera's base ISO for the best image quality. Experiment with different exposure times (varying the aperture to match) and judge how well you are recording the moving flashes of light in the sky. Do be aware, though, that long exposures and using your review screen will take their toll on battery life, too.

Lastly, I can't think of a reason you'd want to tape the focus barrel of the lens, and you certainly could damage or mark it with gaffer tape. The point of focus shouldn't shift as the shutter is open. **Ian Farrell**

WHAT DIGITAL CAMERA?

Q I am looking to buy either a Nikon D7000 or a Canon EOS 60D. I have read lots of comparison tests between these two cameras, but the twin

f/AQ

Printing: home or lab?

There are two main ways of generating hard copies of photographs: by printing at home on an inkjet or dye-sub printer, and by using a professional lab.

I'm sure we've all had a go at the first of these options. Inkjet printers capable of decent-quality small prints are inexpensive and easy to use, although you'd be wise to keep an eye on day-to-day running costs. Check how much a set of replacement ink cartridges cost as this usually subsidises the cost of the printer itself.

Paying more for your printer gets you

FROM THE AP FORUM

Can Photoshop salvage my slides?

SteveofHants asks A number of years ago a lab accidentally processed a roll of print film as if it were slide film and presented me with a nicely mounted but muddy-coloured set of (photo positive) images. As I recently came across the slides again, could you tell me if there is anything I could do to undo the damage using Photoshop Elements 9? They were unrepeatable images of a herd of hippos grazing beside a river in Botswana, and I have never seen this behaviour before or since.

BrianWall replies Without seeing a sample, it's hard to tell if anything could be salvaged. Since you have Photoshop, give it a whirl. Work on a duplicate layer and tackle one problem at a time. I'd suggest getting the Levels right first. Create new duplicate layers at intervals so you can backtrack if needed or merge selected areas.

Spinno replies I reckon your best bet would be to aim to produce some nice mono images – the colour might be more difficult, but you could still give it a go. Scan the image with as high a resolution as you dare.

Beejaybee replies Separate out the red, green and blue layers as monochrome images (labelled so you know which is which). Adjust the brightness and contrast so the histograms the same shape and then recombine. Now you should be able to fix the colour saturation and balance reasonably well using the standard tools. Although not as good as if the film were processed correctly, you should get a reasonably faithful rendering.

In next week's AP

On sale Tuesday 15 November

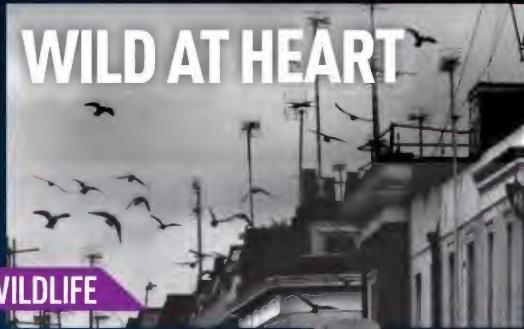
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FIRST LOOK

CANON EOS-1D X

Our first impressions of Canon's
new 18MP professional DSLR



ICONS OF PHOTOGRAPHY



OLYMPUS PEN-F

Ivor Matanle on the half-frame
camera that shook the world

test in AP (26 February) is the first to state that the Canon wins on high ISO sensitivity performance and build quality. Actually, this is the first article I have seen that has ever given Canon the overall advantage over Nikon. So now I'm confused. Based on most reviews, the Nikon produces less noise and, based purely on the workings of a sensor, should generate less noise in total anyway. **Bryan Symonds**

A These cameras have been tested twice by our technical team – first individually and then in a twin test, and each by different reviewers. I can confirm that both these cameras are of an extremely high standard both in build and performance. The single point between the two was gained by the EOS 60D in the noise, resolution

and sensitivity category, based on a slightly finer resolving power at low ISO values. At higher ISO sensitivities both offer similar noise performance, and due to the high noise at the D7000's extra stop it is of little benefit. In terms of build quality, both feel quite evenly matched and there is only 25g between the weights of the two cameras despite the differences in materials. Although the Nikon's magnesium alloy is undoubtedly stronger, it is unlikely to be put to the test in a consumer camera and the EOS 60D is arguably cheaper for the lack of it – currently selling for £100 less than the D7000. I don't think you will be disappointed with either of these cameras, but overall our tests show a slight advantage of the Canon EOS 60D over the Nikon D7000. **Mat Gallagher**

better image quality, bigger print sizes (an A3 model is a great piece of kit to own) and more features, like the ability to print black & white with grey cartridges.

The other thing to think of is paper. Don't stick to the printer manufacturers' own media as there are some excellent alternatives from third-party manufacturers, such as PermaJet, Fotospeed and Hahnemühle. Choose heavyweight, darkroom-like materials for framing and fine art or thinner, brighter paper for print portfolios. Beware high-gloss media as this will reflect room lights.

While desktop printing gives the photographer lots of control, it can also provide a few problems, such as colour management, paper jams and head cleaning. There is a lot to be said for finding a professional lab that can do this for you. This can be on the high street for large

numbers of small prints, or at a professional photo lab when you want something printed at high quality and large sizes. Such companies make it their business to know everything about making hard copies. You can deliver your file (online or on disc) and collect the finished result later.

When you compare the cost of these two methods of printing, there is not a lot in it. Factor in the cost of an inkjet printer, the paper and the ink cartridges and you'll see that it's usually only a little cheaper than printing through a lab – a difference that can wiped out if you have a few attempts at printing a picture to get it right.

Each of these methods has pros and cons, and eventually the decision comes down to personal preference. But if you are a firm devotee of one method, then I strongly urge you to try the other – you don't know what you are missing. **Ian Farrell**

Professor
Newman
explains...

Developing in the digital age

AP's photo-science consultant **Professor Bob Newman** examines how a digital camera 'develops' information into a visible image

IN AP 16 April, I looked at the mechanisms a digital camera uses to produce a colour image. This time the topic is the way such information is 'developed' into a visible image. Although this was covered briefly in the previous article, I plan to dig deeper and examine how different 'development' methods work.

In the days of film I used to mess around in a darkroom, discovering the properties of different developers and the way different mixes changed the appearance of the film. However, unlike my predecessor, the illustrious Geoffrey Crawley, I didn't develop my own formulae. You will notice in this article that I have used the word 'developer' for the process of rendering a digital image, and while it's important not to get too carried away with this term, in this context it is quite accurate as different 'developers' can have quite a profound effect on the appearance of the final image.

WHAT IS DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT?

The major processes in 'developing' a digital image are demosaicing and colour mapping, and it is demosaicing on which we'll focus our attention. Fig 1 (below) is taken from the 16 April article and shows the three red, green and blue sub-matrices in a Bayer colour sensor. The task of demosaicing is to take the data emanating from these and combine them to make a set of pixel values with a reading for red, green and blue at each position. Subsequently, those values will be mapped to provide a set of RGB pixels, which provide a convincing rendition of the scene in our final colour space. If the requirement is to have three colour values at each pixel location, then each individual colour channel will contain a greater number of values than the original channel in the raw file. These intermediate values need to be

estimated by interpolation, and it is the difference in the performance of different interpolation schemes that provides the different characteristics of the various 'digital developers'.

For the advanced worker, it is as well to understand the nature of these differences, and under which circumstances to use which 'developer'. What we are looking for are the side effects of the imperfections in interpolation, which generally cover three different aspects of image quality. The first of these are aliasing artefacts, also known as 'false detail', when the pattern of pixel values that the interpolation gives produces the visual impression of something that doesn't appear in the original image. Second are colour artefacts, and the basis of this is that when interpolation has to estimate not just the shade of a pixel but also its colour, sometimes it gets it wrong. Third is grain pattern. One factor that makes demosaicing more difficult is noise in the raw file. Noise is effectively false detail, and the method of demosaicing has to distinguish between noise and true detail. Sometimes it gets it wrong, and then patterns appear in the noise.

COMPARING METHODS

Using synthetic images, it is possible to produce some alarming demosaicing artefacts. Luckily, real images rarely have such severe problems. For this reason, to investigate the performance of the different algorithms I've chosen a real photo, shown in Fig 2 (opposite). This is Stowe Court in Buckinghamshire. The image contains a number of problem areas so far as demosaicing is concerned, and we will look at how different methods handle these.

There are two versions of the image, with one shot at ISO 100 that should have little noise to disrupt the demosaicing process, while the other is shot at ISO 3200 and

will have more noise. The white boxes on the image show the crops, which contain features that highlight the deficiencies of some of the interpolation methods. For example, the steps in front of the house are prone to aliasing, as is the cross-shaped railing in the portico, which also exhibits colour aliasing. The tree's leaves and the grass can be left looking most unnatural by aliasing artefacts, and the brown ivy on the tree trunk contains detail that is easily confused with noise.

The raw file was processed using Raw Therapee (www.rawtherapee.com), an open-source tool that allows the user to select between a number of demosaicing methods. In addition, Dave Coffin's ubiquitous ddraw program (www.cybercom.net) was used to provide a simple 'half-size' conversion, which simply aggregates four pixels (red, blue and two greens) to make a half-size (on an edge) pixel.

The other demosaicing methods are bilinear, which interpolates each of the red, green and blue channels separately, simply estimating the value of the missing pixels by taking an average of the surrounding same colour pixels. Then there is a variable number of gradients (VNG). This method tries to overcome the problem of noise producing bad estimates by computing gradients (rates of change) of pixel value near the pixel to be interpolated. The value of the pixel is estimated in the direction with the lowest gradient (less severe change). Adaptive homogeneity directed (AHD) tries to do a similar thing to VNG, but uses a 'homogeneity' (sameness) metric instead of gradients to determine which surrounding pixels to use for interpolation. Finally, two sophisticated algorithms, DBB (by Jacek Gózdz) and AMAZE (by Emil Martinec) are intended to maximise detail while minimising perceptually problematic artefacts.

CONCLUSIONS

The producers of commercial raw processors do not generally reveal their demosaicing algorithms, although they may be deduced from their properties. For instance, Adobe Camera Raw appears to use a variant of the AHD method. It's a shame these algorithms are not revealed, because it is clear that the demosaicing algorithm can make as much difference to an image as did the choice of chemical developer. The algorithms evaluated here are available in most open source raw converters, and the latest versions, which are DCB and AMAZE, do appear to provide an excellent balance of detail, freedom from perceptually intrusive artefacts and pleasant 'grain' with low exposures.

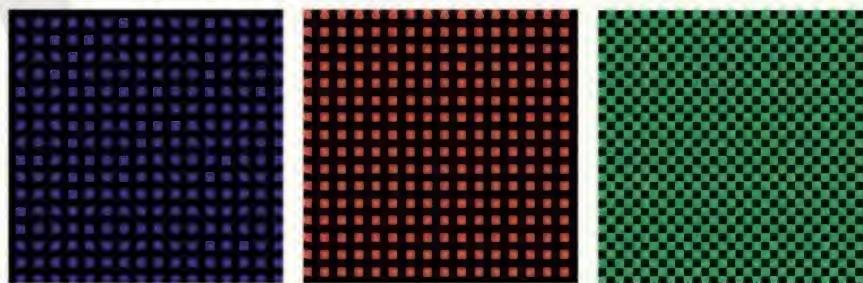


Figure 1 The three sub-matrices in a Bayer colour array. Note that the green matrix has twice the number of pixels as the other two

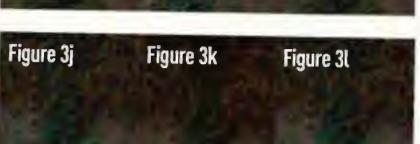
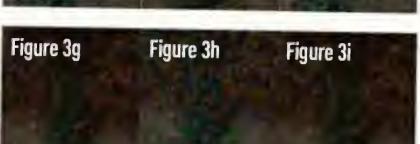
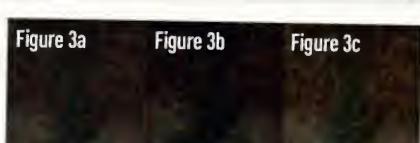
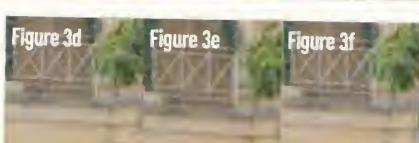


Figure 2 The test scene, Stowe Court. The white boxes are the three crops that will be used to evaluate the different demosaicing techniques

Figure 3a Half-size/ISO 100. Naively one might expect this image to be the most accurate, but it displays bad aliasing both on the steps and in the railings. The half resolution is obvious, as there is colour aliasing on the steps and little detail in the dark ivy

Figure 3b Half-size/ISO 3200. Increasing the amount of noise simply magnifies the problems. There is extensive colour aliasing and very little detail

Figure 3c Bilinear/ISO 100. The doubled detail has helped to relieve some of the problems with the half-size conversion. There is some aliasing in the diagonal rails, and the leaves have an unnatural structure. There is some detail in the ivy

Figure 3d Bilinear/ISO 3200. Obviously, the aliasing is no better than the higher exposure version. The noise has been rendered as intrusive white 'salt' noise

Figure 3e VNG/ISO 100. There are fewer aliasing artefacts in the diagonal rails, although they have colour artefacts, as do the steps. The leaves look a little more natural. Detail is not quite as high as in the bilinear version

Figure 3f VNG/ISO 3200. Again, the high-sensitivity version shows broadly the same characteristics, with the 'salt' noise less intrusive than bilinear

Figure 3g AHD/ISO 100. The colour artefacts have largely gone, although the diagonal rails have some artificial structure and there are unnaturally hard highlights in the leaves and the stone

Figure 3h AHD/ISO 3200. The noise has been rendered as intrusive 'maze' artefacts, which detract a lot from the quality of the image

Figure 3i DCB/ISO 100. This is very similar to AHD, with perhaps less severe artefacts in the rails, and slightly less severe highlights

Figure 3j DCB/ISO 3200. The similarity with AHD doesn't extend as far as the



maze artefacts, which have largely gone. These have been replaced by 'salt' noise, although it is not very intrusive

Figure 3k Amaze/ISO 100. This has slightly more detail, slightly fewer artefacts and more natural highlights. Also, it has the most detail in the dark ivy

Figure 3l At high sensitivity, it is very difficult to distinguish between Amaze and DCB. Like all the others, there are colour effects in the steps at ISO 3200



BOB NEWMAN originally trained as a physicist, and is now an engineer and computer scientist with a PhD in real-time systems design. He has been working with the design and development of high-technology equipment for 35 years and has been responsible for innovative developments in graphics workstations, avionics, marine instruments and radar

systems. Two of his products have won innovation awards. Bob has led research projects in design methodology, automotive technology and, more recently, sensing systems. He is currently Professor of Computer Science at the University of Wolverhampton. Bob is a camera nut and has been a keen amateur photographer from the age of seven. He is delighted to be given the opportunity to apply his professional expertise to his hobby.

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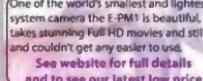
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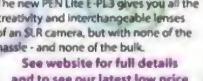


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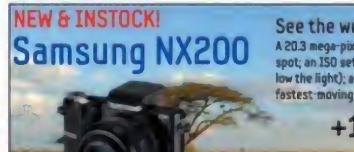
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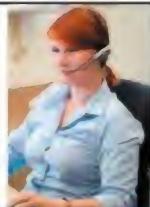
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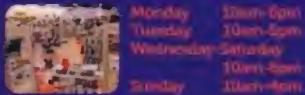
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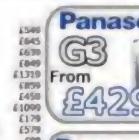
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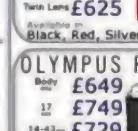
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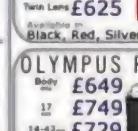
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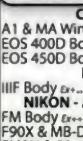
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ROGER HICKS

'I could afford one if I wanted it, but it's not worth the money' is a meaningless phrase

A PHRASE that I regard with increasing suspicion is, 'I could afford one if I wanted it, but it's not worth the money.' It's a phrase you often hear applied to expensive cameras and lenses.

What, if anything, does it mean? The much more common phrase, 'I can't afford it,' is considerably less equivocal. It means what it says. Even if I sold everything I possessed, including my house, I couldn't afford a rebuilt Spitfire, for example. With the same sacrifice, I could probably afford at least one of everything that Leica made, but if at that point I were absolutely penniless with no roof over my head, how much good would it do me?

Obviously, these are extremes. So let's scale back a couple of notches. Let's say an elderly aunt dies and leaves you £5,000. You could easily spend the lot on camera gear. But let's suppose that your washing machine is on its last legs (or possibly, has fallen to its knees). Maybe you'd do better to spend some of your windfall on a new one. You'd have bought one anyway, and in that sense, you could afford it before or after the legacy. The difference is that the legacy makes it easy: you can afford it without really having to think about it.

But 'afford it easily' is another weasel phrase. Just think of the things you don't really want to buy, even though you can afford them without too much pain, and even though you know it would make life easier if you did. The washing machine is nothing like as much fun as a new camera, or a long weekend in Paris, but rationally you'll get more long-term benefit from the money you invest in a new Miele than in a holiday.

Of course, you can buy the washing machine and some camera gear and take a trip to Paris, but then your inheritance will evaporate pretty smartly and you'll have no money left, and money in the bank is always comforting. At this point you can save some of it, buy the washing machine and some camera gear, and take a trip to Paris, but there won't be much left for camera gear.

'Afford' now starts to look like nothing more than a price-demand curve. The cheaper something is, the

more willing we are to buy it, assuming we want it at all. This varies from person to person. For example, if I saw a pair of high-end trainers reduced from £200 to £100, I still wouldn't buy them. At £50 I might, out of curiosity, but only if I were feeling flush. At £20, I might buy several pairs, if they fitted well. Someone else, who habitually bought them at £200, might buy two or even three or more pairs at £100.

In other words, 'I can afford this...' must always be read in conjunction with '...and want it enough to be willing to lay out the money'. At one extreme, there are things I don't want at any price, though I suppose I'd buy a few burgers at a penny each at a fast-food restaurant to feed stray dogs. At the other extreme, I may be prepared to make sacrifices in order to save up and buy something, or, taking the inheritance example, to choose it above something else I would like, but not as much.

Even then, 'like' has to be interpreted. Is it: 'Have always wanted'; 'Can now afford for the first time'; 'Know I will find it useful even though it's boring beyond belief'. I apologise, of course, to those who get excited about washing machines.

But the puzzling part about those who say, 'I could afford it if I wanted it, but it's not worth the money,' is how often they take exception if you say, 'You mean, it's not worth it to you.' If they have any sense, they say, 'Of course. What else could it mean?' But surprisingly often, they'll start blustering about how anyone would be a fool to spend that sort of money, whatever 'that sort of money' may be.

Well, possibly. I don't know. The likelihood of my ever having enough money to buy a new Rolls-Royce is slender, and as I don't have the money it's a bit presumptuous of me to call someone else a fool for spending money they do have – though I have to say, I've always fancied a Bristol instead. I can't help suspecting, though, that all too often, 'I could afford one if I wanted one' means exactly the same as 'I can't afford one, but I don't want to admit it, even to myself.'

'Just think of the things you don't really want to buy, even though you can afford them without too much pain, and even though you know it would make life easier if you did'

Roger Hicks is a much published author on photography. He has written more than three dozen books on the subject, many in partnership with his wife Frances Schultz. He has been a freelance photographer/writer since 1981, contributing to many magazines. Visit his website at www.rogerandfrances.com

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Repro Camden Town Typesetters Ltd Telephone 0208 523 6700

Printed in the UK by Wyndham Group

Distributed by Marketforce, Blue Fin Building,
110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU. Telephone 0203 148 3333

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Nikon 1



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